

THE HOMES OF THE LEPCHAS

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289 of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have [212] to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

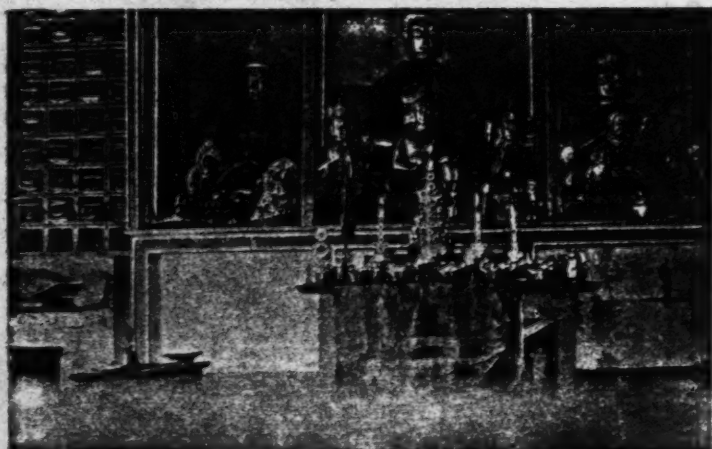
346 To the front of the monastery is a piece of artificially raised level ground of perhaps fifteen yards depth. It is covered with 351 fairly rough short grass; and at the far edge against the low stone wall are set up a number of prayer flags in memory of the dead, and a few for the benefit of the living. There are one or two small outcrops of rock. All round the building, except in front of the porch, is a narrow flower border in which are grown European flowers, of which seeds or cuttings have been brought from Gangtok—hollyhocks, petunias, sweet william, geraniums, dahlias, and flowering cactuses. In the grass near the wall are several large bushes of small-flowered pink and red roses and some large clumps of hydrangeas. The flowers from these plants are used to decorate the lamaist altar, in preference to the numerous orchids which can be found in the neighbourhood.

Below the monastery wall is a small wood chiefly composed of juniper and *ficus*; about fifty yards from the monastery inside the wood are four *choten* walls—long rectangular stone barrows with stones inscribed with prayers let into the side. The most considerable of these is surmounted by a terra-cotta decoration of a half-moon and three diminishing circles. These *choten* are not funeral piles, nor even cenotaphs; their intention is apotropaic.* Some religious ceremonies are performed by the *choten*, particularly those in which both lamas and Mun (the priests of the old Lepcha religion) take part, for the latter are not allowed to officiate within the monastery precincts. The wood is also used as a public latrine [514] during festivals, and animals, particularly pigs and cows, come to pasture there.

351 To the right of the monastery is an ordinary Lepcha house 794 (except that the entrance is on the west instead of the east side) which is normally the home of the monastery custodian who looks after the garden and ground. He has a small garden (*sing*) in front of the house and also one or two little enclosures with

* I am employing the term *apotropaic* for all religious actions whose aim is preventative rather than curative. The *choten* are to keep devils away, not to expel those already present.

PLATE 10



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Above : THE MONASTERY ALTAR DECORATED FOR THE CEREMONY IN HONOUR OF KINCHENJUNGA

Below : THE LAMAS PRAY. OPPOSITE SITS CHIMPET TO BEAT THE GONG

Note the *pariyoot* of *chi* by each lama.

[facing p. 184]

RELIGION I: LAMAISM

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793 calendrical services, and ministering to the sick or threatened as individual necessity arises.

Lamas are meant to perform various private devotions when they wake in the night, early in the morning and in the evening. Tafoor and the second Dorjé Lapoon were aware of these duties, but I naturally have no evidence as to whether they or any other lamas did in fact perform these devotions. Also during the day
 778 when a lama is alone and unoccupied he is meant to tell his beads,
 788 repeating *mantra* hundreds and even thousands of times. Lamas
 787 always wear a rosary of one hundred and eight beads with a couple of attached smaller objects; during ceremonies these rosaries are worn round the neck; during work they are often twisted round the wrists. They are used for devotion in exactly the same way as a Roman Catholic rosary, as a memento of the number of prayers which have been said. Rosaries are also used for divining; the rosary is thrown on to the ground and picked up at the place where it has fallen into a coil; the beads are counted from this place to one of the attachments by twos or threes; the presence or absence of a remainder gives the answer to the question divined. In the case of illness a twig is brought from the invalid to the diviner; the twig is placed on the ground and the diviner holds the rosary to his forehead, concentrating on the devil which he thinks may be disturbing the sufferer; the beads are then thrown on to the twig, and those between the bead touching the twig and one of the attachments counted; if the answer is negative the procedure will be repeated with the diviner concentrating on another devil. Rosary-divining is not confined to lamas; Mun and Padem also have divining rosaries but they are made somewhat differently, with red beads interspersed among the black and with different attachments; knowledgeable laymen also are able to divine by rosaries, if they have received *loong* from a qualified teacher. The rosary is considered in a way more personal than the other sacred implements—bell, skull-drum, sacred dagger, 'thunderbolt'—which the higher lamas have to possess and employ in different rituals; those of old lamas possess a certain talismanic virtue.

796 The lamas have to visit the monastery twice every Tibetan month; on the 10th. a festival is held in honour of Guru Rimpuché and on the 15th. in honour of Kinchenjunga. The feasts which accompany these festivals are meant to be given by a pair of householders in turn, so that from the villages of Lingthem and Panung each householder is responsible for half a communal feast every

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796 year. There are actually only forty-two householders for twenty-four feasts, but some of the richer households or those which consist of more than one working family give the feasts by themselves. The feasts for Guru Rimpuché are provided by lamas, those for Kinchenjunga by laymen. The duration of the ceremony depends upon the amount of food and drink provided; if the feast is plentiful, it may last thirty-six hours, starting at sunset on the preceding evening and continuing till the following dawn; if the feast is a poor one it will only last during the daylight hours of the day of ceremony.

778 In essentials the ceremonies are all similar. An altar-piece—
796 its elaboration depending on the size of the festival—is fabricated by the competent lamas out of a variety of materials, of which the chief are flour mixed to a paste, butter either white or coloured and occasionally coloured threads. The ground-work of the altar pieces are blocks of wood, usually flat for Guru Rimpuché and raised in five mounds (thrones) for Kinchenjunga. On these are placed more-or-less life-like dough images of the chief gods, surrounded by innumerable and almost shapeless cones to represent the minor gods and attendants and satellites. Round the image of Kinchenjunga are represented the hundred gods which inhabit the body of the donor of the feast. Those dough images are decorated with white and coloured butter to represent their clothes and jewels. Sometimes a 'halo' shaped like an arum leaf is placed behind the chief gods; the halo consists of elaborate and very pretty flower decorations made in coloured butter on tin shields. Occasionally the altar-piece is surmounted by small dough birds fixed on thin splinters of bamboo; or alternatively there is added to the monastery altars materials which are practically always used in private and personal ceremonies: a *deu* or 'palace of supernaturals' consisting of elaborate geometrical shapes in coloured thread fastened round a central bamboo; and splinters with tufts of wool stuck at odd intervals down their length which are called *pong* and which are considered to represent the clouds which surround the homes of the supernaturals. Always before the commencement of the preparation of the altar-piece a small cone is made to represent Gett'r *moong*, the demon of quarrels. The quarrel demon is first invoked and then destroyed in order to prevent quarrelling or evil words taking place during the ensuing ceremony and feast.

796 When the altar is prepared the musicians start playing in twos and threes and big groups. If the altar has been made the night

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before the ceremony the musicians will continue playing at intervals all night, but the laymen do not start arriving till the next morning. In the morning all those who have been invited by the givers of the feast, which, except in the case of very poor people or very unpopular ones, means practically the whole village, start arriving at the monastery, each bringing with them some contribution in the form of food or *chi*, which will be of assistance to the giver of the feast. During the whole day the lamas sit in their seats in two parallel rows from the altar to the door, except when they go out for a slight rest and change of air. Their food and drink is brought to them at their seats in the monastery and they have permanently a *patyoor* of *chi* in front of them. The worship consists of special readings and chantings from the sacred scriptures interspersed with music.

Owing to the fact that the feasts in honour of Kinchenjunga are given by laymen certain precautions are taken and certain opportunities are given for acquiring merit which are not considered necessary for the feasts given by lamas. The precautions consist of the offering of *cherkem*—grain floating in *chi*—which is thrown out to the devils by a layman with cries of *Lo chi-do*—‘take this’—and the burning of a bonfire of aromatic herbs and leaves to gratify the supernaturals. The lay-giver may, if he wishes, acquire merit by performing the ceremonial dance called *da-floh* before the altar, prancing and chanting in front of a folded cloth on the top of which his hat is laid, with the knife to the right and the scabbard to the left. In the evening the altar-piece is perambulated three times round the monastery and is then broken up; the dough is eaten (lamas however may not eat it) and the butter smeared on the heads of those standing round; this butter is regarded as a sort of sacrament which conveys blessings on those whose head is smeared with it. The Dorjé Lapoon in person anoints the heads of the lay-givers of the feasts and their families. Although this ends the religious part of the ceremony, gossiping and drinking may continue all night if sufficient *chi* has been provided.

Calendrical festivals take place frequently, at relatively fixed dates throughout the year. The greater number are apotropaic, intended to ward away those evils inherent in the season: illness in the winter and summer, hail and predatory animals when the crops are growing, quarrelling when the harvests are gathered, misfortunes in the new year, and so on. These ceremonies vary very considerably in elaboration. Some, such as the ceremony to

● 796 appease Débrong *pa-no*, the king of hail, will be performed semi-privately in the house of the officiating lama, a little grain for the sacrifice having been collected by the *gyapön* from every household in the village so that the ceremony is felt to be for the benefit of the whole community, though practically none may be present at it. Others are extremely elaborate; Boom koor lasts for three days. This ceremony is somewhat similar to beating the bounds; the sixteen volumes of the Boom are carried in procession with all the musical instruments by the lamas in their finest dresses, all round the village; the procession follows a fixed route with points where it stops for prayers and feasting, the feast taking place in the biggest house in the neighbourhood and being provided by all the dwellers in that district; the procession itself takes forty-eight hours and the night is spent at some house half-way distant on the route, in the procession I saw, at the Mandal's house. The evening before the procession starts an elaborate ceremony is held to ward off all the predatory animals and thieves and destructive demons who would harm the growing crops; and when the procession has returned to the monastery and the sacred books have been replaced an all night service and picnic follows. This ceremony is held after the sowing of crops is completed to protect the crops and ward off all evil from the community; everybody except infants in arms, invalids, and the old and infirm join in it.

To describe in detail all the calendrical ceremonies which I have witnessed, let alone those that I have been told about, would be beyond the scope of this book. The ceremonies occur at almost weekly intervals, and though each differs considerably in detail from all the others, the general effect and intention of all are very similar. An extremely elaborate and detailed effigy of the supernatural whom it is intended to appease is made; the supernatural is invoked with prayer, music, readings from the scripture and gifts; is adored as a god; and then, whether it be in general benevolent or malevolent, is prayed to go away, and its image is taken some way away and abandoned or destroyed. Some of the ceremonies which take place outside the monastery are accompanied by parallel ceremonies performed by Mun.

I only propose to describe in detail a single calendrical ceremony, the destruction of the quarrel demon, which takes place in the autumn. This ceremony is more vivid and dramatised than the greater number of lamaist exorcisms; its details however resemble most of the other exorcisms.

RELIGION I: LAMAISM

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Quarrelling is caused by a trinity of three devils *Soo-moong* 796 (enmity of speech), *Gé-moong* (enmity of thought) and *Thor-moong* 578 (enmity of action). To prevent quarrelling this trinity *Soo-gé-thor* is symbolically destroyed once a year in the monastery in the month of November; the ceremony is called *Thorsu*; every person of the village should be present; those who are unable to come should send gifts and crops instead.

First of all a very large image of the supernatural *Thorgyop* 796 *rum* is made and at the four corners are placed containers, one filled with blood mixed with poison, one with milk, and two with *chi*. [532] Somewhat in front of this is made a smaller image of *Soo-gé-thor* and in front of that is an unshaped heap of earth (the other images are also made of mud) with an egg on top so arranged that the egg is opposite the demon's heart. The demon is three-sided with images made of butter impressed with a wooden printing block⁷ on each side. By the egg stands an archer with a bow and arrow ready. First of all the god is invoked and when he is considered to be present the lama says in Tibetan 'we are giving your life into the hands of a cruel man'. After this the devil is invoked and when it is thought to be present in the image the archer will shoot an arrow in such a way that it pierces simultaneously the egg and the heart. This is repeated three times with different eggs.

Another image is made of *Soo-gé-thor*, this time recumbent [532] and with open mouth and arms. He is summoned from wherever he may be, whether he is in the skies or on the earth or under the earth; when the devil has entered the image it is hacked into small pieces and offered to the god mixed with poison and blood; then these pieces together with pieces of paper inscribed with the devil's name are rammed into a hollow bamboo which is covered with a thick cloth and put among the firewood under an iron griddle and set fire to. After this the lamas again read from the scriptures.

Finally a third image called *Sor-so-mu* is made; this is a three- [532] sided pointed lump of mud smeared with blood and stamped on each side in butter with the name of the devils and their effigy. The lama after long prayers holds this pyramid above his head and throws it forward; the direction that the pointed end turns to

⁷ A number of engraved blocks with representations of different supernaturals are kept in the monastery for use as circumstances require. The most generally employed is the *lo-kor*, the representations of the patron supernaturals of the twelve year 'animal' cycle.

- 796 is the direction in which the devil has gone. Should the pointed end turn backwards, that is towards the thrower, it is a very bad omen; it means that quarrelling will take place in the succeeding year.

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755 The exorcisms and apotropaic rites performed by lamas for the benefit of individuals are even more numerous and varied than the calendrical rites. There is scarcely an ill which man is heir to which has not its individual and appropriate ceremonial remedy. Like the calendrical ceremonies by far the greater number consist of making an image of the possessing devil, invoking it, worshipping it, and then destroying it.⁸ Besides the image of the central devil there are always a number of minor ritual objects, the most important of which is a twisted piece of dough called *chongbu-tipkü*. At the end of the ceremony the sufferer, or, in some cases all present, have this piece of dough ceremonially waved over them (*pét*) by the officiating lama as a ritual cleansing. In the greater number of ceremonies this is the only rôle which the sufferer plays. He is often not even in the same room as the lamas. At the beginning of the service the devil is always erected facing the lamaist altar; when the ceremony is finished the model with its stand is turned round to face the house-door; a double line of flour is traced from the devil to the door as the route it must take to go out, and the image on its board is then carried away either into the forest or to the place where four roads meet. For some exorcisms those who carry the devil have to go through some ritual or be ceremonially purified before they are readmitted into the house.

In some of the exorcisms a dough image of the sufferer is made and offered to the devil in lieu of the body of the sufferer; and in others, especially when it is divined that the devil has been sent through human agency (usually unwittingly: evil or envious thoughts can unleash a devil without the responsibility of the thinker) the devil, in the form of a winged insect, is ritually killed by the lamas with their sacred dagger. Finally, in some apotropaic ceremonies the threatened person himself plays a rôle; thus, for the ceremony *doak-po doat* the sufferer has to progress through the smaller squares of a big magic square, gradually having all his appearance changed: he starts off dressed in black, carrying a stick,

⁸ Outlines and descriptions of some lamaist ceremonies will be found in Chapter Thirteen and especially in Appendix III.



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THE CHERIM CEREMONY I

Above : The Mandal and Gongyos (arm only) fill the containers of the *rum* offered to the devils with milk and tea.

Below : Pumri offers strained *chi* in a cup to the gods of Kinchenjunga. Old Kahlyeu, on her left, offers grain.

[facing p. 220]



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THE CHERIM CEREMONY II

The model of Mamoo moong with the 'deu'—the nine-storeyed devil's palace made out of coloured threads—in position down by the *choten* just before the worship begins. In the foreground are Katel and Jiroong. Behind, Chala Mandal and Lumba.

[facing p. 224]

756 each household. There are however a few ceremonies when a Mun sacrifices and prophesies for the whole community; but all that I have seen or heard of are adjuncts to lamaist ceremonies.

756 In the Cherim ceremony which is held twice yearly, once at the beginning of the rains, and again at the beginning of winter, to keep off illness from the community, three separate rituals are performed, two by Mun, and the third by lamas. The communal nature of these sacrifices is emphasized and at least one individual from each household has to be present, and each household contributes a little of the grain. So that the Mun can participate the ceremony is held on neutral ground, when I saw it on March 28th., by the *choten* below the monastery and just outside the sacred precincts.

[787] The first part of the ceremony consists of an offering to the devils: this ceremony is called *run* after the name given to the chief article of sacrifice. This is a large basket filled with earth and covered with a banana leaf into which are inserted a number of varied articles with eight¹¹ of each sort of article: 'devil's walking-sticks' consisting of decorated bamboos with flowers inserted in holes, containers of water, milk, tea and *chi*, pieces of mica, stems of wormwood decorated with threads, fresh eggs, heaps of grain, and dried bird, dried fish and ginger. There are also offered two *ta-ming* which consist of long sticks to which are attached wrapped in leaves samples of every sort of food and drink. When the offerings have been made the Mun, sitting opposite them, intones a long chant to invoke the gods, and then takes the eggs and holds them to his forehead while he shuts his eyes and concentrates; the line which he envisages inside the eggs foretells the future health of the community. In the spring of 1937 Gongyop saw 'a fairly straight path' which signifies that there will be a mild epidemic of stomach trouble. Four years ago, when there was a bad epidemic of dysentery he saw 'a curved, almost spiral path, with a knot at the end of it.'

The second ceremony, also performed by Mun, consists of offerings to the Gods of Kinchenjunga and the Plains, and is called Tsandong. The offerings consist of rice, butter, *chimi*, a rupee and eggs. The sacrifice is in two parts; first grain and strained *chi* are thrown out by the Mun and her assistant (in March 1937 Pumri was assisted by old Kahlyeu) and later a goat is dedicated and then killed.

¹¹ It may be noted that for Mun and lama odd numbers are lucky, even unlucky.

PLATE 17

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THE CHERIM CEREMONY III

Above : Mamoo moong in detail ; she is made of buckwheat flour decorated with butter. Note small kite-shaped *deu*, inscribed labels, *nakhleut* at the base.

Below : The lamas invoke Mamoo moong. Right on the left is a *chayé* table with bowls of water and rice for the gods' refreshment ; seated on the left is the second Dorjé Lapoon fingering his rosary ; on a cloth in front of him his sacred bell and brass *dorjé* or thunderbolt. Tafoor, who made the nine-storey palace is playing the cymbals. On the right, half out of the picture is lame Satéo, ready to strike the gong. Note the *patyeot* of *chi*.

[facing p. 228]

RELIGION II: THE MUN

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75c These two ceremonies together took about four hours. None of
 79b the people present took any notice of either of them. The few who
 [78] weren't cooking, eating, gossiping or braiding one another's
 hair, watched the lamas preparing their very elaborate ceremonial
 objects. The chief of these was the *deu*, the 'nine-storeyed palace'
 consisting of elaborate regular polyhedra in different coloured
 threads supported on bamboo splinters through a central bamboo.
 This 'palace', which took over four hours to complete, is made to
 mollify the ghost-devil of an old king of Tibet called Dayom;
 in his lifetime his palace and monasteries were destroyed so that he
 had nowhere to live; in revenge his spirit roams about harming
 people. The palace is offered to beg his pardon and to persuade him
 to return home without hurting the people in the neighbourhood.

This palace however only formed the background of the whole
 object. The foreground was occupied by an elaborate representa-
 tion of the female devil Mamoo *moong*, portrayed as a snake-haired
 female riding on a tiger, and surrounded by hundreds of lesser
 objects. The devil was made out of buckwheat powder, and it was
 impressed on the onlookers that any laughter while the buckwheat
 was being handled would automatically result in a thunderstorm
 with thunderbolts. When the whole object had been made with
 frequent consultations of the sacred book the invocation and read-
 ings from the scriptures with musical accompaniment began;
 then an offering of boiled rice and fresh buckwheat bread was
 offered to all the gods and devils; then the ground was cleared
 and *cherkem* offered to the devils; then Mamoo *moong* herself was
 summoned and gratified with the offerings of copper pots and cloths
 (these are only offered symbolically and are later retaken into use);
 and when Mamoo was presumed to be in a good temper the *chongbu-
 tipkū* round her image were handed out for all to wave over them-
 selves; then the image was taken off the temporarily erected altar.
 It was getting dark by the time the ceremony had reached this
 point, and therefore there was no time to carry the image in proces-
 sion across three streams, accompanied by musical instruments,
 as should be done; instead it was only carried across one stream
 that day, and the following two the next morning. If animals have
 not devoured the image within three days it is a sign that there will
 be sickness in the coming season; if however they have devoured it
 in one it is a sign of prosperity. Before the image was taken away the
 procession was held up while a Mun (in this case Lumba *jethi*) sang
 an unaccompanied song thanking the gods for their kindness in

- 756 coming when they were invited, and begging them now to go away.
 776 On those occasions when singing is called for it is nearly always the Mun who sing, and they possess a considerable repertoire of more or less sacred songs. All these songs are in the minor key, more or less rhythmic, with a great stressing of the last syllable of each line, which is prolonged for several notes, usually in a descending scale. The tunes are not set, and allow of easy improvisation. Songs are often sung at feasts, and always at marriages; they are always unaccompanied. The bamboo flutes which some young men make and play are used entirely as a solitary diversion.

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- 756 The services of the Mun are continuously necessary in the life of every Lepcha. They must always be present at birth, at marriage they are the only essential priests, and at the death of laymen their rôle is of more emotional importance than the lamas. Throughout life they are necessary for cleansing from supernatural danger, for blessing and solemnising different undertakings, and, above all, for expelling devils.

- 756 Ceremonial cleansing is performed by *pék-ing*, by the Mun waving certain objects over the actual or potential sufferer. The
 783 objects waved differ with the circumstances; thus in the fifth
 [843] month of pregnancy both parents are *pék* with a bunch of elephant grass to insure an easy delivery: if labour is difficult the mother in childbirth is *pék* with a live chicken, and, if she or her husband have neglected a pre-natal precaution, with the object which has been wrongly handled or finished. Similarly after an abortion or still-born child has been thrown into the river, a Mun will *pék* the carriers with a bunch of stinging and thorny plants and the parents will be *pék* with a live animal which will later be sacrificed, in order to prevent the devil which has caused one death causing more. *Pék-ing* is employed in a number of circumstances, sometimes alone, and sometimes as part of an exorcism. It is the nearest approach in Lepcha life to ritual cleansing.

- 756 Blessings are invoked and pacts solemnised by the ritual of *sakyou saat*, the pouring or drinking of strained *chi* from a cup or the sides of which dabs of butter have been placed. It is not absolutely essential that Mun perform this ritual; any old and experienced man who has received *loong* may do so. *Sakyou saat* cannot
 [585] be offered by women, except by women Mun inside their own homes, by lamas, or by people in mourning. The ceremony is performed to solemnise a marriage, to set up the ~~usual~~ relationship to mark the formal swearing of an oath or before starting any unusual undertaking.

351 windy days my favourite tree would bend and sway with incredible grace: it reminded me of some frail craft riding a stormy sea.

137 When we first arrived the hillsides were covered with
 267 yellow daphne, the bark of which is used to make paper. There were also a number of flowering apricots, orange trees, and ferns of every description, including the huge umbrella-like tree-fern, the pith of which can be made into spirit. Rather strangely, for Sikkim is famous for its flora, we found no flowers, but the undergrowth was thick with wormwood, which saturated the air with its pleasantly bitter scent.

103 According to the Lepcha dictionary the word Lingtem means "a mixture of slope and level: to be out of the perpendicular, to incline, to have leaning outwards." The place is all of these, except that the amount of level ground is negligible; and it was not possible to go more than a hundred yards or so in any direction without going either
 367 steeply up or down hill. The lowest and highest houses in the village were not more than a mile apart; but to go from one to the other involved a climb of well over fifteen hundred feet.

361 There were altogether thirty-three houses in Lingtem, and
 167 a total population of one hundred and seventy-nine souls. These thirty-three houses were spread about over several square miles of country, and in no particular spot were more than three or four grouped together. The grouping was entirely haphazard and in no way based upon relationships: a man might be at one end of the village, his brother a mile away. There was no attempt at planning; the village had just grown up like this. Additional houses would be built on any suitable site: the proximity of relations was of less importance than the selection of a spot that was free from evil influences. The monastery was situated in roughly the

527 centre. In addition to its ordinary function as a place of
 ● 796 worship, it served also as a village club. Twice every month there would be religious festivals, when anything up to

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eighty people, including men, women and children, would 527
be present. They would spend the day feasting and drinking, 796 ●
and on some occasions would continue the party well into
the following day. There would generally be some visitors [574]
from nearby villages and, in consequence, much exchange
of gossip. These fortnightly meetings served the purpose of
a newspaper and helped to keep the people in touch. They [203]
were almost the only break in a life of otherwise unceasing
toil.

There are no shops in Lingtem, no doctor, and no school. 438
The people are mainly self-supporting and grow all their
own food. Such things as cotton, oil and salt are obtained
from Mangan which, in addition to a few Marwari shop- [205]
keepers, has also a post office to which mails are delivered
twice a week. This, however, is not much used, since the [212]
Lepchas are for the most part still illiterate. This means that
in order not to forget a thing they do not find it necessary
to commit it to writing. As a result, they have, like most [153]
primitive peoples, quite remarkable memories.

For the first few days we were left completely alone; not 609
a soul ventured near us. Early each morning Dhawa and
I would set off in our quest for people, but everywhere we
went there was nothing but empty houses, each with its [231]
guardian dog. I began to get worried, for it certainly looked
as though the Maharaja was right, although actually (but
I only learned this later) the people were merely away
working in their fields. And then one morning Geoffrey
discovered an ancient alone in a house. He was toothless, 123
decrepit, and ill, but willing to risk a visit. We decoyed him
up to the monastery, gave him some medicine and plied
him with cigarettes. As an informant he was useless; but
his visit served to break the ice. Others followed, and the
village soon realised that we really were harmless. There-
after we were able to arrange for a regular stream of
informants and someone or other usually came each morning
to talk. In this manner we soon came to know most of the
village by sight, and after the first few weeks were able to

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Lingtem Monastery.

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Images in the main room of the monastery. On the table in front is a complete offering, consisting of *termas*, bowls of grain and water, lamps, etc., prepared for the monthly worship of Kinchinjunga. The large central figure represents Padma Sambhava, generally known as Gura Rimpoche.



796



Lamas dedicating the offering to Kinchinjunga. The woman standing in front of the altar has come in to serve the Lamas with *chi*.

[Facing p. 72]

When she has spent some years in any one rank she seems to take unto herself the next. Even the so-called Inebu Dorje-Lopön appears to have no authority over the others and, like them, her devotions are confined to the turning of wheels.

Inebu come to the monastery three times every month: on the eighth, fifteenth, and thirty-first (the day of full moon), according to the Tibetan calendar, which is in general use in this part of the world. On the nights preceding these three days the Inebu may not sleep with her husband, nor is she permitted to eat any meat. Of the ten Inebu in Lingtem six claim to be able to read; but in actual practice this does not amount to more than the ability to recognise the characters of the phrase *Om mani padme hum* when they are seen on a flag or cut in stone. The letters forming this sentence are so familiar that even quite small children are able to recognise them: the situation is almost exactly the same as the European child who soon learns to identify the cat in its first picture-book. This, however, is very far from the ability to read; but it is the stage beyond which most Inebu seem never to progress.

825 expected to become teetotallers. Amongst orthodox Hindus
 171 it is only the horn which is considered of any value. To the ignorant masses, however, all parts of the animal are sacred; and the creatures' keeper at the Calcutta Zoo is said to earn a substantial bonus by the regular sale of its excrements, for which the demand exceeds the daily supply!

The gall-bladders of bears are not in much demand in India proper, but considerable quantities are annually exported. I was once travelling on the Nepal border when I came across a large party of Tibetans. There was nothing unusual in this; but when I strolled up to talk to them I noticed a large pile of silver dollars on the ground. These men, it appeared, spent the whole of each summer touring through Nepal in search of bears' gall-bladders. When they had collected a sufficient quantity they took them to China, where they are much prized as aphrodisiacs. With the money received they bought up turquoise, for which there is a great demand in Tibet; and their surplus cash they changed into Singapore dollars. These, on account of their size (rather larger than the ordinary Indian rupee), they were able to dispose of in Nepal at a price much in excess of their actual exchange value, there to be mounted as female ornaments. Many Tibetans, so they told me, are at present engaged in this trade.

* * * * *

- 796 In addition to the treatment of private individuals, certain ceremonies are carried out from time to time in order to ensure the general good health of the village as a whole. They usually take place in spring and autumn, when the change of season often results in a mild epidemic of colds or dysentery. These ceremonies are prophylactic; like our own daily gargle in the influenza season.

The *Cherim*, with a note on which I started this book, was one such ceremony. It took place towards the end of March and was carried out by both Lamas and Mun, and in the presence of most of the village.

The place selected for the ceremony was in a small clearing below the monastery. It was at the junction of several paths; and was adorned with two long walls of inscribed stones and a number of prayer-flags raised on bamboo poles. From this vantage point one had an uninterrupted view in two directions: of Kinchinjunga to the west, and of the Tibetan peaks to the east. Early in the morning two rough field altars had been prepared, one facing towards Kinchinjunga, the other looking down the valley. On the latter altar offerings would be placed to the "demons of the plains," such as send in disease and pestilence from the outside world.

In a situation such as Lingtem it is natural that Kinchinjunga, or Konchen as he is locally called, should be more venerated than in places where the mountain is not visible. Perhaps because of this its worship forms an integral part of nearly every local ceremony, as in the present case; this, of course, is in addition to the religious celebrations in the mountain's honour which are held in the monastery on the fifteenth of every month, this day being sacred to the god.

"The mountain Kanchinjunga [*sic*], on the western border of Tibet," notes Waddell, "is known to most visitors to Darjeeling and northern Bengal. This graceful mountain, second in height only to Everest,* was formerly in itself an object of worship, as it towers high above every other object in the country, and is the first to receive the rays of the rising sun and the last to part with the sunset. Kinchinjunga literally means 'the five repositories or ledges of the great snows' and is physically descriptive of its five peaks, the name having been given by the adjoining Tibetans of Tsang, who also worshipped the mountain. But the Sikkim saint, Lha-tsun Ch'embo, gave the name a mythological meaning,

* This was correct when Waddell wrote in 1894. Since then, however, Kinchinjunga (28,148 feet) has had to yield its place to K.2 (Mount Godwin Austen: 28,250 feet) in the Karakoram. It is now the third highest mountain in the world. The error has not, however, been noted in the 1934 edition of Waddell's book.

823 and the mountain was made to become merely the habitation of the god of that name and the five 'repositories' became real store-houses of the god's treasure. The peak which is most conspicuously gilded by the rising sun is the treasury of gold; the peak which remains in cold grey shade is the silver treasury, and the other peaks are the stores of gems and grain and holy books. This idea of treasure naturally led to the god being physically represented somewhat after the style of 'the god of wealth.' He is of a red colour, clad in armour, and carries a banner of victory, and is mounted on a white lion. He is on the whole a good-natured god, but rather impassive, and is therefore less worshipped than the more actively malignant deities."

796 The altar for Konchen was properly finished, and constructed from freshly cut branches of trees. That facing down the valley, however, was only very roughly constructed and consisted of little more than a few ferns on top of a beaten-down bush. These two altars were later to contain the sacrifices offered by the Mun, whose part in the ceremony it will be convenient to describe first.

796 When we arrived Gongyop was busy preparing an object known as *Rum*. This was a circular basket, filled with earth, about one foot in diameter, with ferns placed round its edges. While he was making this, others were constructing *Mung Patoong*, or devils' walking-sticks. These are bamboo sticks about two feet long with the tops frayed out to look like flowers, and were later decorated with petunias, everlasting flowers, and red roses from the monastery garden. These *Mung Patoong*, eight in number, were now stuck into the back of the *Rum* in the form of a semicircle. In front of them was a similar row of slightly shorter hollow bamboo sticks, called *Tek*. In front of these again was another semicircle, also eight in number, of even smaller pieces of bamboo called *Tur*. All of these were roughly decorated with incisions cut with a knife. Later on the eight *Tek* were filled with water and the *Tur* with milk.

The *Rum* was now placed in position on the altar looking

796

Lamas preparing the
Yey to be used in the
Cherim ceremony.

[793]



[778]

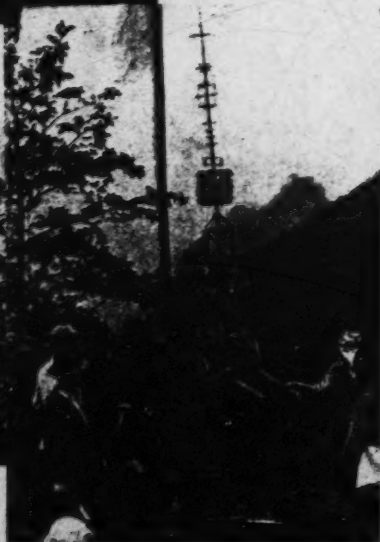


The Gado, complete
except for its "trim-
mings" of grain and
leaves.

The completed Gado, with the tall Yey in
position. The offering is about to be carried
away in procession. →



The Rumi in position, showing the line of
Mung Patsong, or devils' walking-sticks.



[Facing p. 154]

● 796 down the valley, and Gongyop came and squatted in front of it, prior to placing the remaining objects in position. Of these the most important were eight eggs, which had been previously inspected by the Mandal to see that they were fresh. Should bad eggs be offered it would mean that some one would fall ill. A heap of parched rice was now placed in the centre of the basket, this having been contributed by the whole village, each householder bringing a small quantity done up in banana leaves. Eight stones were now picked up from the path and placed in position. Scraps of fish, miscellaneous birds' flesh, sticks of ginger, and rice followed. There were also eight slender branches of wormwood, with all but the leaves at the top removed. Gongyop now constructed eight small cups from the folded leaves of banana. He placed these round the front edge of the basket and then attached strings of red, white and blue cotton to the eight sprigs of wormwood. Having done this the *Rum* was sprinkled with holy water: the offering was now ready.

796 Gongyop now began to chant very quietly and quickly, at the same time taking up one of the eggs and pressing it hard against his forehead. He continued thus for about a minute, after which he got up and replaced the egg on the *Rum*. He did this several times; and then took another series of red, white, and blue strings, which he draped across the basket. He now filled one of the small cups with water and green tea-leaves, locally grown. When only three eggs remained he put some grain in a small leaf cup, scattered some of it over the offering and replaced the remaining eggs. After this a helper came and filled the lamps with butter. Three hollowed-out banana stems, each about six inches long, were now brought, on each of which was a small heap of smouldering ash. These three heaps are known, respectively, as *Songsur*, *Kasur*, and *Chasur*. On *Songsur* was put a little juniper, together with some ghee; on *Kasur*, grain and ghee; and on *Chasur*, green tea-leaves and ghee. [573] Now the lamps were lighted; and since there was a slight wind blowing a protector of banana leaf was placed over each one to prevent it being extinguished.

- 776 The whole offering was again sprinkled with holy water, and Gongyop continued his incantations.

He told the gods and demons that the *Rum* was now being given them; they must be satisfied and go away without [781] troubling the people. None of the spectators, of whom about forty were present, displayed any interest in the proceedings; but one old man came and sat by Gongyop for a time and seemed to be chanting with him word for word. Gongyop [787] later told me that when he held the eggs to his forehead he thought he saw what looked like a fairly straight road. This meant illness, but nothing very serious: probably a mild epidemic of stomach-ache would follow.

While Gongyop was carrying out his part of the ceremony a long pole, supported on several uprights, had been erected alongside the *Rum*. This is called *Tumsheung-Pating*. From the cross-piece several dozen miniature packets were suspended: most contained various kinds of grain; but there [824] were also some heads of barley, sticks of majito (a root used [384] for dyeing), bits of wool and cotton; small bits of everything, in fact, that people use in their daily life. Most of these offerings, which had been contributed by the whole of the village, were tied into little banana-leaf packets; others were in miniature plaited baskets. This was said to be a general offering to the demons; but there was no ceremony in connection with it. An identical *Tumsheung-Pating* was constructed to one side of the other altar. This was for the Lord Konchen, the other being for the devils who rule in the plains.

We have already seen that the main altar was built facing up the valley towards Kinchinjunga. Old Kahlyeu now [445] brought a small brass tray, on which he arranged seven heaps of parched rice (again contributed by all the village), four eggs, one silver rupee, and three small lamps. Later on, three cones of butter were placed on top of the rice. There was some doubt as to the correct number of eggs required: [801] some said three, others five; but old Pom-Ri, the Mun who was now to officiate, was sure that four was right. The whole

of this offering is known as *Chandong*. It was put on a ⁷⁹⁶winnowing-tray, on top of which an old piece of red cloth had ^[241]been spread, the whole being then placed in position on the altar.

Pom-Ri is seventy-two, and has recently married the ^[52]second Dorje-Lopön. She said that this particular part of the ceremony was always done by a female Mun; but she could give no reason for this. After placing the eggs in position she took each one in turn and pressed it to her forehead, just as Gongyop had done. She said, however, that she was not using them for divination but was merely dedicating them to Konchen.

A tray of burning juniper was now brought and put on the ^[824]ground to one side of the altar. This was to dissolve the ^[821]clouds on the mountain, in order that the god might see the sacrifice. It was ineffective, however, for Konchen remained invisible throughout the day. Pom-Ri now took a small drinking cup, round the rim of which butter had been smeared. A female helper, also a Mun, stood at her side and ladled *chi* into her cup from time to time. Pom-Ri now started to chant, assisted by Kahlyeu, who sang more or less in unison with her. He is not himself a Mun, but likes to take part in these ceremonies. Whenever she sprinkled the *chi* from her cup he threw out a handful of grain from his cap, which he held all the time in his hand. Their incantations were almost inaudible, but I could distinctly hear the word "Konchen" uttered at the moment when *chi* and grain were cast away.

After about twenty minutes Pom-Ri and her two helpers turned round and continued their chanting facing down the valley. I was told that having propitiated Konchen they had now turned their attention to the demons of the plains.

While this ceremony was in progress a goat had been slaughtered in the bushes just behind. It was killed in the usual way, by thrusting a bamboo stake stuck into its heart. At ^[112]the place where it was killed a fire was burning, on which the meat was lightly singed. The head, liver (impaled on a stick),

- 796 and the washed entrails, together with a bowl of the animal's blood, were now brought and placed on the ground in front of the altar. The three celebrants turned again towards the mountain and offered the meat to Konchen, after which it was taken away and divided up among all present by the Mandal. While the chanting was still in progress a child was [865] making rather a noise close by, whereupon the female helper, in a harsh voice, told it to stop: it obeyed at once.

796 It was now about two o'clock; but since early morning
778 several Lamas had been busily engaged in the preparation of a large nine-decker *Deu*. The *Deu* is an elaborate form of *Tay*, and its function is the same as that already described for the latter. This particular one was built up on a piece of bamboo some ten feet in length, and was decorated with white, blue, yellow, and red thread, and later ornamented [776] with tufts of white and magenta wool. It was meant as a house for the Mung called Dayom Pano, one of the many special devils of illness. It was not completed until about four o'clock, and by this time other men had constructed yet another altar, facing down the valley. At the same time a sort of stretcher was made. This was constructed of bamboos and ferns, and a platform of hard rammed earth was placed in the centre of it. A little powdered millet was now scattered over the earthen centre, while Lamas kneaded dough of millet and buckwheat. Tafoor now took a handful of the dough and fashioned it roughly into the shape of a tiger, which was later given white powder eyes and black eyeballs made from charcoal. This was impaled on a thin bamboo sliver, which had been fixed in the centre of the earthen base. A female figure was now made of dough and placed astride the tiger. This is called *Gedo*. Its head was covered in small stringy pieces of paste, said to represent serpents, which streamed down over the shoulders like hair. Many small dough *Tormas* were also made, and placed all round the central figure, each being stamped with a design which was a replica of the *Gedo* itself. These *Tormas* represent the servants of the figure, and are called *Diget*. To them were now added

several long sausage-like pieces of dough, similar to those⁷⁹⁶ described for use with the *Go-sum*. They were arranged in the⁷⁷⁸ form of a square, inside which were now placed three triangular cups and one round lamp, also made of dough. At each corner of the figure a *Yay* was placed: yellow, in the rear left-hand corner; red in the right; blue in the front right corner; and white in the left. In addition to these were inscribed wooden labels, arrows, and spinning rods, exactly the same as already described. In front of all was a row of small bowls, some containing rice and some water; one of them also had a rose stuck in the centre of it.

The whole offering was now scattered with rice and other grains, and pieces of coloured wool and bits of cotton were laid on it to represent the clothing of the servants. A few^[517] roses and other flowers were stuck in here and there; but these had no significance and were merely added to make the whole thing look pretty. Finally, a narrow piece of bamboo, about six inches long, was brought and placed behind the row of cups and in front of the main figure. This was fitted with six wicks, which were later lighted.

Several young Lamas now arrived carrying musical instruments from the monastery, while others were hastily constructing an altar against one end of the wall of stones. It was merely one of the ordinary low Tibetan tables with a cloth over it. In the centre was a large plate of rice decorated with three high cones of butter: to the left was a bowl of *chi*; and to the right a large lump of butter floating in water. In front of the large plate of rice was an exactly similar but smaller one; and in front of this again a large dough *torma*, with six small bowls to its right. These contained, from left to right, water, a wick floating in butter, rice, rice decorated with roses, and two more filled with water.

The altar was placed at right angles to the second Dorje⁷⁹⁶ Löpön, who sat facing the *Gedo*. As soon as everything had^[533] been placed in position the altar was sprinkled with water and he, together with Tafoor, started to chant in a droning Sing-Song voice.

796sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them¹ and banged
 [201]drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of
 the various parts of the service. There was another small
 table in front of the Dorje-Lopön and on this was placed his
 bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and
 sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi*
 in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time
 he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the
 liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common
 Lamaist rite of *Serkyem*: it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After
 perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their
 ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
 [781]bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the
 spectators were paying little attention; those who were still
 sufficiently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and
 placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the
 central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was
 now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the
Gedo. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of
 the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided
 by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf,
 the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray.
 Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a
 symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned
 to their owners.

[788] Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
 779]moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas
 referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed.
 The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the
 Dorje-Lopön stood up and called upon the gods and demons
 to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.

[782] There was another short period of chanting, after which many
 people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the
 cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved

[781] it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they
 did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them;
¹ [i.e. The second Dorje-Lopön and Tapaor.--Analyst]

MAGIC AND SPELLS

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it was almost the only occasion in Lingtem when I saw any-⁷⁹⁶
 thing approaching a display of emotion. But even now it was⁷⁸¹
 not marked.

An effort was now made to rouse the more moribund of the⁷⁹⁶
 spectators, and the Mandal formed them into the semblance
 of a procession. The stretcher was taken down from the altar
 and several men started to move off down the path, carrying
 the thing high on their shoulders. It looked as though the
Deu would fall, whereupon the Mandal rushed out and
 removed it. It was then carried separately by a boy who
 walked in front, the whole procession being preceded by the
 monastery band. The procession moved a few yards away
 and then came to a standstill. Chôteмбу's tipsy wife
 tottered out from the ranks and started to sing and dance.
 Palden said that the song was in honour of the gods and^[533]
 implored them to go satisfied away; but the old lady was^[781]
 almost incoherent and distinctly unsteady about the feet.
 After a while the procession again started forwards, urged on
 by a man beating a solid disc of brass, which sounded like a
 station bell.

It was now six o'clock and almost dark. The *Gedo* should
 by rights have been taken to the top of a hill and there
 abandoned; but owing to the lateness of the hour a dis-
 pensation was obtained and it was taken only as far as the
 nearest stream. Provided the offering was taken across water
 at once it could be placed in its final position to-morrow.
 After it has been finally abandoned the *Gedo* is examined
 daily for the next three days. Should it be eaten by domestic
 or other animals in the meantime all is well: otherwise it is a
 sign that the gods have not accepted the offering and the^[787]
 ceremony is of no avail. The other offerings, those made by
 the Muns, were abandoned on their altars, and remained in
 position until destroyed by wind and rain.

About forty people in all attended, a much smaller number⁷⁹⁶
 than generally gathered for services at the monastery. I was⁵⁷¹
 told that this was on account of there being no reading of the
 sacred books, for which people always make an effort to be

796 present. Every household was, however, represented, and the
571 communal nature of the ceremony was further emphasised
by the numerous offerings of grain which, together with the
cost of the sacrificial goat, had been contributed by everyone
in the village.

CHAPTER 12

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

21st March:

796 **D**URING most of last night sleep was impossible owing to the musical preparations for to-day's celebrations. A number of Lamas arrived during the evening, and at about nine, just when we had gone to bed, started to make the night horrible with the banging of drums and cymbals and blaring of trumpets. Having been used for the greater part of my life to hearing the bagpipes played in a small closed room I thought I was inured to this sort of thing; but this noise is really too much to be borne with equanimity. Heard at a distance, when it comes reverberating over the hills, this monastic music can sometimes sound extremely beautiful, especially on a cloudy moonlight night: but at close quarters it is a meaningless cacophony, and sounds like a symphony by one of Hindemith's less inspired followers; but to imagine the effect one must think of a powerful wireless turned on at full blast in a very small room, with every door and window closed.

At about eight o'clock this morning people started to arrive, and others continued to turn up throughout the day, until by evening nearly a hundred men, women and children were present. Most of them sat about outside the building, eating and drinking almost continuously, and nobody seemed to take the slightest interest in the service which was going on inside the monastery. The necessary food and drink for these fortnightly gatherings are provided by two households at a time, the turn coming round about once in every ten months. The quantity of food and drink provided on these occasions depends upon the means of the hosts, but Tafsoor says the following is an average amount per person:

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[262]

3 pounds of rice, served in two portions.

3 bamboo containers of *chi*, each one refilled with hot water as soon as emptied and as often as any strength remains in the millet. The general effect of this is roughly equivalent to about eight bottles of fairly strong beer. This represents the average daily consumption by most men and women: toppers drink considerably more than this, children rather less.

4 bowls of tea.

2 handfuls of parched grain.

2 portions of meat; one served with the rice, the other given raw to take home at the end of the day.

Soup, as demanded.

3 small cups of strained spirit, each one roughly equivalent to a double portion of neat whisky.

[431]

To-day's feast has cost Tafoor and his co-host about thirty rupees each in actual cash; but most of the food and drink, of course, was provided from the family store. He bought the meat and also an ox's skin from Tempa; but if everybody in the village turned up a whole ox would have been necessary. In addition to the above most people brought contributions of vegetables and odds and ends of spices. Incidentally, the skin of an animal is considered a particular delicacy, and I saw several people hard at work chewing the bits of raw ox skin. It looked like, as indeed it was, leather, so the threat of eating one's boots would appear to be no idle boast in Jongu. Tafoor says that high pork is also very nice; goat, however, should always be eaten fresh. Slightly high beef is extremely good. In summer it can only be kept for three or four days, but in winter it will last as long as a month: it is at its best after about a week. People never throw high meat away; but if maggoty it is liable to make one ill. Apart from this the higher meat is, the better it tastes, except in the case of game birds, which should only be eaten fresh: *de gustibus non est disputandum*.

While the feasting was going on outside the monastery⁷⁹⁶ ● the actual service was carried on in the main room of the building. To us it appeared to be little more than indiscriminate banging of drums and cymbals; but actually the whole order of service is described in detail in a Tibetan^[779] book, the instructions in which are carefully followed. From time to time some of the Lamas came out and joined in the general fun and games, but none of the revellers appeared to enter the monastery except to keep the monks' bowls filled with *chi*.

By midday most of the people were more or less tight. I⁷⁹⁶ saw a boy of about sixteen attempting to feel the breasts of⁵²² Tafoor's wife, much to the amusement of the onlookers and⁸³¹ the woman herself. She freed herself from his attempted embraces, uncovered one of her breasts and squeezed some milk out of it into her hand. She then ran after the boy and tried to rub the milk on his face. At this there was general laughter; and although a number of old people were present they took no notice; nor was conversation restrained in their presence. Later on in the evening this same boy made some personal remarks about Tafoor's wife again, whereupon she again bared her breast and tried to squeeze some milk into his hat; but he was too quick for her and darted away. There was a great deal of this sort of play, and Dhawa and Sukra Sing said that the conversation was almost exclusively devoted to sex. As Christians they naturally disapproved of this conduct; but even Palden, who is no Puritan and who has lived in a Lepcha village for years, says that this sort of thing never happens in villages in other parts of Sikkim, where women are not even allowed to enter the monastery compound. He was quite genuinely shocked; not so much^[781] at the sexual freedom, but at the lack of reverence shown at what is, after all, a religious festival.

A great deal of mess has been made in the monastery⁷⁹⁶ garden and it appears to be nobody's duty to clear it up. The place looks like Hampstead Heath after August Bank^[358] Holiday, and there is a smell of stale beer about the place.

- 796 There was a final crash of music at about nine p.m., after which the rest of the night was silence; but I already had such a splitting headache that a little more or less noise would hardly have made any difference. It would be pleasant to get away from these people for a bit; but alas, in four days' time there is to be another festival; this time in honour of Kinchinjunga.

25th March:

796 Banging of drums and cymbals and trumpet-blowing at 533 intervals throughout the night, but no set piece, so to speak, before 4.30 a.m., when there was a blast of trumpets such as that which we are asked to believe brought down the walls of Jericho. I was half asleep at the time and thought for a moment that an earthquake was imminent.

796 Soon after dawn more Lamas arrived, and by about eight 789 the usual twenty or so were present. Before the service started a large bundle of wormwood was lighted in the garden, the moment when it took fire being greeted by loud shouts from all present. The purpose of this fire is to keep the clouds away from Kinchinjunga throughout the day, so that the god may observe the ceremonies being carried out in its honour.

796 All day yesterday Chodu and two companions spent the 778 day constructing a most elaborate *torma* called *Pong Rum*. It was built up on a wooden baseboard about eighteen inches long and contained five separate offerings, the central one, dedicated to *Jung Ngaw*, being rather larger than the others, which were in honour of the following deities, all said to be satellites of *Konchen*: *Pauhunri* (a mountain forming part of the Cho La range, and known to irreverent mountaineers as Poor Henry. It is very prominent from Lingtem); *Pe matchin Chaw-men*; *Ditchen Phoop*; and *Hla-ri Ning-phoop*. The intervening spaces between these five main cones were completely filled with small *tormas* of every shape, said to represent attendants, ministers, servants and various minor deities. There were over two hundred of these, each having

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a separate name. It was found that the entire company ⁷⁹⁶ could not be accommodated on the *Pong Rum* itself, so the ⁷⁷⁸ overflow was arranged on a brass tray, which the Lamas, however, later forgot about and never put on the altar. In the centre of the *Pong Rum* and immediately in front of the central cone was a yak's head (*Yok thyak*) made of dough, but nobody seemed to know its significance. The preparation of the entire offering took four men roughly five hours. At the end of the ceremony it will be broken up and eaten; but the men who have made it are not allowed to taste it, which seems unjust. This morning the whole thing was brought out of the monastery and each of the five main cones further embellished by the addition of a sort of tin cape on which a design was built up in butter coloured bright red, blue, yellow and green. The whole thing now looks like the sweets served on Lloyd-Triestino liners and is, I should imagine, equally unpalatable. It was now taken inside and placed on a table in front of the altar, immediately in front of the central figure of Guru Rimpoche. Later on, bowls of water and several lighted lamps were put down in front of it, and a jar of incense was lighted at one side.

There was the usual periodic chanting, like bees swarm-⁷⁹⁶ ing, alternating with the usual bursts of music, and the actual ceremony did not appear to be different from that of the 21st, although to the initiated the order of the service was doubtless completely different.

About midday a small table was brought out and placed on the grass in front of the monastery. A bowl of *sher-kem*, the special ceremonial *chi* with maize and other grain floating in it, was placed on this, together with a large brass tray containing a number of small *tormas*. A young novice now came and stood by the table, took up one of the *tormas* in a spoon, and dipped it in the mixture. Having done this he held the spoon out at arm's length until there was what I can only describe as a musical orgasm inside the building, when he threw it from him with a shout of *loch!* whereupon

- 796 it was at once snapped up by one of the numerous dogs waiting on the edge of the grass for this purpose. This was repeated at short intervals for about an hour, when one of the Lamas decided that it had gone on long enough and threw the remains of the liquid and the *tormas* away without further ceremony.

Palden says that the belief is that Konchen and the other gods come down from the mountain and enter the *tormas* as soon as the service starts and only return to their homes on its conclusion.

At about six in the evening, just when it was growing dark, the whole *Pong Rum* was carefully removed from its place in front of the altar. It was first exhibited to the assembled Lamas inside the building and was then carried in procession once round the monastery. Except for the two men carrying it, the Lamas remained inside the building, but [78] most of the spectators walked behind the offering, some of them turning prayer-wheels and chanting as they went. One man seemed almost fervent (or was it merely the drink?) and called upon the mountain god to bless him; and several told the carriers to halt a moment at the corner so that the gods could see the offering; but by this time Kinchinjunga was completely obscured by clouds. It is believed that the spirits take their departure while the *Pong Rum* is being carried round the building.

As soon as the procession reached the main door again the offering was put down on the ground unceremoniously and quickly torn to pieces and distributed to all present. Some people first put their portion to their foreheads in an attitude of reverence before stuffing it into their bosoms to take home; others treated the host with no reverence and consumed it straight away. Following the distribution of [535] the consecrated *tormas*, Katel, who was rather drunk, put a hat, scarf and two unsheathed knives on the ground in front of the altar and then did a slow and rather solemn dance, keeping time to the beating of the drum and cymbals. It was said that this was not an integral part of the ceremony.

After this the two feast-givers and their complete households⁷⁹⁶ came in and put down several plates of rice and maize in front of the altar: this was an offering to the officiating Lamas, who would later distribute it among themselves. The Dorje-Lopön then got up from his seat and took another large *torma*, which had been made in honour of Guru Rimpoche, down from the altar and pressed it in turn against the foreheads of the two feast-givers. He then took a large dab of butter off the *torma* and smeared a little of^[788] it on the head of each member of this party, while they knelt in front of him. This was done with great reverence and there was a distinctly spiritual air about the whole^[781] proceeding, the first time I have noticed anything of the sort among these people.

After this blessing of the feast-givers Chodu took a brass^[778] *dorje*, or thunderbolt, placed it on top of an upturned china plate and put it on the floor in front of the altar. It remained in that position while he went to the door and cast out a handful of grain of various sorts, after which he handed it back to the Dorje-Lopön. This was followed by another short reading in unison, when the day's proceedings ended abruptly without further ceremony, having been going on continuously for some fourteen hours. Most of the people went home after this, but a few were still sitting about when we went to bed at about nine-thirty. The rest was, unfortunately, not silence, since we were awakened by a sudden burst of music at three a.m. This, however, was only a flash in the pan, so to speak, and for the remainder of the night we were undisturbed.

Throughout the day, while the Kinchinjunga festival had⁷⁹⁶ been going on in the main room, the Inebus had been celebrating a service of their own in the small room in which the three large prayer-barrels are housed. It consisted of merely keeping the three barrels turning continuously, while singing in unison the following refrain over and over again: ^[533]

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ad lib.; but not less than one hour!

I found it attractive the first time I heard it; but after several hours its constant repetition became somewhat monotonous and I wished that they could at least have changed the order of the notes. One cannot, however, please everybody, and it appears that the gods like this sort of thing; but, in any case, it was the only tune the ladies knew.

535 *Interlude in Gangtok, 21st August, 1937:*

721 In addition to the worship of Kinchinjunga, which takes place once a month in all the Sikkim monasteries, an annual war dance is held in Gangtok in honour of the mountain, and is attended by people from all over the State. I was glad to renew acquaintance with a number of friends from Lingtem, most of whom were, however, rather too drunk to take much interest in the proceedings.

The war dance is peculiar to Sikkim and is not performed in other Buddhist countries. It is carried out in honour of Kinchinjunga, who is called, in brief, *Dzo-nga*, meaning "the five treasures." He is believed to be the god Kuvera, who is otherwise known as rNam-sras-mDung-dMar-chan—(this is the spelling given me by the Maharaja; after many attempts I have come to the conclusion that it is not pronounceable by anyone with a normal European mouth!)—who is represented as being of red colour, armed, and mounted on a white mountain lion; but, in point of fact, I believe that lions are not found in mountain countries and certainly do not exist in the Himalayas. In Sikkim, Kuvera is invoked as the god of war, and as such has to be worshipped periodically. The display of warlike pomp, in which the dance consists, is thought to be pleasing to the god; and is also meant to foster the martial spirit of the people.

In order, however, that the ceremony should not degenerate into a mere display of demon-worship, Maha Kala, the

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[778]

Lamas preparing the *formas* which will later be offered to Kunchinjunga.



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Lamas at worship. The duty of the novice is to beat the large drum, in front of which he is sitting. Note the bamboo container of *chi* by the side of each Lama.

[778]
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At the conclusion of the service the offering is brought out and exhibited to Kunchinjunga.



[Facing p. 274]

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law, whose efforts on the latter's estate in Bhutan, as I have ⁰⁰⁰ seen for myself, have already achieved remarkable results.

The standard of living in Jongu is higher than anywhere ⁵¹¹ else I have seen in India; and I should say that the people are ¹⁶⁴ better fed than the average peasant in Central Europe at the present day. As a result of this the Lepchas do not appear to suffer from any of the deficiency diseases, with the possible exception of goitre, which are so common in other parts of the Himalayas. Dysentery, however, is common, and is responsible for the death of many young children: with medical help it could easily be eliminated. There is also a certain amount of avoidable disease through dirt, scabies, sores, and such-like things. It is no exaggeration to say that the people never wash; nor should I if I had to live in their ^[515] conditions. We Europeans have so recently discovered the comforts of cleanliness that at present we are inclined to overdo the washing business altogether; but there is a happy mean!

But drink is probably the greatest social evil in Jongu; and ⁷³³ this, too, may have a bearing on the question of sterility. All the Lepchas, men, women and children, drink far too much; and in Jongu it was unusual to find any adult completely sober in the evening. Fortunately, I personally found *chi* a most unpleasant drink, for it tastes to me like a mixture of sour cider and old ale gone bad; but had I attempted to keep pace with Lepcha hospitality I should by now have been in a home for advanced inebriates: the only defence was to plead teetotalism. A little alcohol, of course, does nobody any harm; but unfortunately the Lepcha is not satisfied with a little. It seems quite impossible for him to drink in moderation.

Of religion little need be said except that in Jongu the ⁷⁹³ Lamas are priests only in name; they have no learning ⁷⁹⁶ beyond a smattering of Tibetan and are incapable of expounding even the elements of their doctrine. The so-called religious festivals in Jongu were regarded merely as an ^[781] excuse for having a party; there was nothing spiritual about them.

793 them. Lamas, like the priests of all other religions, are
● 796 sometimes charlatans; but in Tibet, and also in other parts of
Sikkim, I have met many who impressed me with their
sincerity and saintliness. Even one such could do a great deal
of good in Jongu.

660 Whether the Lepchas are worth preserving in their present
state is a question I will not presume to answer. But in any
case it is one that will probably answer itself during the
[157] course of the next few generations. All I can say is that I
found them a cheerful and very charming people, and that I
personally should be sorry to see them disappear.

In closing this letter, which is overlong already, I should
like to take the opportunity of thanking Your Highness for
all the help you have given me, and especially for permitting
me to work uninterruptedly in Jongu.

Yours sincerely,

C.J.M.

October, 1937.

CHAPTER 15

RETURN TO CIVILISATION

24th May:

SEVERAL Lamas spent the night in the monastery so as ⁷⁹⁶ to be ready for the *Boom Kor* ceremony, which starts at dawn to-morrow. The *Boom Kor* consists in carrying the sacred books, together with a small image of Guru Rimpoche, all round the village. In Jongu this is done once a year, but in other parts of Sikkim twice; its purpose is to keep away sickness, and it may be compared with the old English custom of Beating the Bounds.

Banging of drums and trumpet-playing started punctually ⁷⁹⁶ at four a.m., after which there was no more sleep for me, and ⁷⁷⁸ continued at intervals until the procession formed up at about half-past seven and started to move off. Each book was wrapped in yellow silk and carried by a woman, every household in the village being thus represented. The image of Guru Rimpoche was carried by a Lama on a small cushion of yellow, white and blue cloth: another Lama carried a large bell-like contraption, made of the same materials, on a long pole. This represented the god's umbrella. Yet another priest carried a small pot of holy water: this also was adorned with a "ballet skirt" of yellow, white and blue.

The procession went via Ongden's house, and the upper ⁷⁹⁶ part of the village to Tingkep's house, where the first halt was made and refreshment served. We arrived there at about eight-thirty to find the reading in full swing. No one seemed to be in charge, and each Lama seemed to be reading more or less on his own; but it was obvious that many of them could not read and were merely repeating by heart such bits of the scriptures as they happened to know.

- 796 The party moved off again at about ten a.m., carried out another bout of reading at a house on the way, and eventually reached the Mandal's, where the night was spent, at about three in the afternoon. By this time most of the party were completely "under the weather," so to speak, and could barely walk, so that the last part of the procession was carried out in a somewhat disorganised fashion.

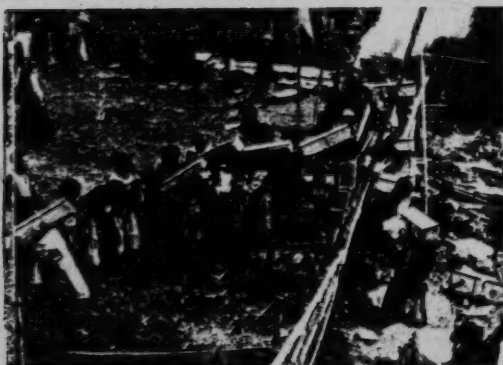
The following morning it moved off to the neighbouring village of Panung, which is really all part of Lingtem, whence it returned direct to the monastery, which was reached at about half-past two. In the meantime I walked a couple of miles along the road with Geoffrey, who was leaving for home, meeting the returning procession on the way. It was a little the worse for wear, but was otherwise moving along quite nicely. As it re-entered the monastery all the women who had not accompanied it formed up in two long lines, with their hair let down as a mark of respect. As [576] the book-carriers entered the garden the women crowded round and pressed their foreheads against each book in turn, and some ordered their children to do likewise; there was no display of emotion. Some of the women were carrying offerings of grain and lamps on trays, and one had a plate of small *tomas*. Most of the village was by this time present, and all now joined the procession, which circled several times round the building. A halt was made at each of the four corners, where a little of the grain was offered to the gods. Finally, the complete gathering went upstairs to my "bedroom" in order to return the books to their shelves. [788]

This was done in ceremonial fashion and to the accompani- [788] ment of the complete monastery band: the noise was deafening. While the books were being put away most of the people kept prostrating themselves on the floor. Towards the end of the proceedings the people seemed to get a little bored and the last few volumes were bundled anyhow into the shelves, after which the ceremony just fizzled out and most of the spectators drifted away. But alas, not all, for a number remained behind to prepare the offerings for to-morrow's

796
The Boon Kor ceremony. The procession about to leave Lingtem monastery.



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The sacred books starting off on their journey round the district. Each volume is carried by a woman.



778
Small image of Guru Rimpoche, over which a bell-shaped "umbrella" is held, and pot of holy water being carried in the procession.



[Facing p.290]

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The return of the *Boom Kor* procession. Women with offerings and Lamas pronouncing blessings as the procession returns to the monastery.



[778
779]



Villagers pressing their foreheads against the books as they are carried into the monastery.

[576]

Carrying the books upstairs. Note that all the women have let down their plaits as a sign of respect.



[Facing p. 291]

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● 796 festival in honour of Kinchinjunga, when the Mandal is to be one of the hosts. From the point of view of noise and privacy the two ceremonies were continuous, and there was yet another sleepless night. Most of those who remained behind [522] were completely drunk, the chief occurrence being the stripping of old Dunbyo, who could only just stand, by a bevy of equally tipsy maidens, who chased the old man round and round the monastery in his birthday suit. The lights were put out at about nine o'clock, but I was given to understand that on this occasion the sanctity of the building was not regarded!

Music again commenced at four a.m. and continued throughout the day. Owing to the Mandal being the feast-giver there was a more than usually large attendance; but otherwise the ceremony did not differ from the previous Kinchinjunga festival, which I have already described.

[832] One drunken old woman from Panung, whom I had [522] several times tried unsuccessfully to photograph, was going round lifting her skirts and exposing her person to each of her friends in turn, at the same time simulating the act of copulation: nobody appeared to think there was anything unusual in her conduct. The party ended officially at about seven in the evening; but once again a number of people remained all night in the monastery. This time, however, they were too drunk to make any noise and the night was mercifully quiet. I suppose this is the last of these festivals I shall see.

1st June:

600 All the camp kit and my surplus baggage has been sent off with the cook to Kalimpong while I, taking only a very light outfit, go up to the Talung Monastery and return thence by the ordinary trade route to Gangtok. It is a relief to have one's belongings reduced again to reasonable proportions. It has not ceased raining for the last three days, and I fear that the Monsoon has already broken. It is really too early in the year to attempt the Talung trip and some of the older

Tibetans. They are reported to be used by the Mongols who call them *ongge*, "colour", makhabut "body" or *torgaguli* "obstacle", the last name certainly referring to their ritual purpose. It seems, however, that their use has become very rare in Mongolia in more recent times.¹⁸

Other reports show that thread-crosses are used by the Kachin and some of the Naga tribes, especially in death ceremonies, and for averting or destroying evil.¹⁹

Further to the southwest we find, that thread-crosses are extensively used in the religious ceremonies of the Lepchas of Sikkim. The Lepchas, who adhere today to Tibetan Buddhism, have preserved some practices of their original religion, which—after the name of its priests—is called the Mun religion.²⁰ Consequently there is a mixture of rites and beliefs of both religions and it is very difficult to state with certainty, which of the rites and religious ideas originated from the Mun or from Lamaism. This situation is made still more complicated by the fact that the Buddhist teachings introduced into Sikkim were those of the unreformed *rNying ma pa*, the "Old Sect", which preserved in its religious practices many customs originating from the Bön, which, however, have scarcely been studied up to now.

How closely the Mun religion and Lamaism became associated among the Lepchas is shown by the fact that many of the Lepcha ceremonies are concurrently performed by Mun priests and lamas.

Thread-crosses are called in Lepcha *deu*—corresponding to the Tibetan *Do*, *mDos*—or *Yeu*, an equivalent of the Tibetan *Ye*, *Yas*. As to the meaning of the thread-cross, it is generally regarded by Lepcha lamas as a "seat", "house" or "place" for supernatural beings. The tufts of wool, which are fastened to the thread-cross or are placed on top of bamboo sticks planted near the structure are supposed to represent clouds, surrounding the "palace".

The remainder of this paper consists of details of Lepcha ceremonies in which thread-crosses are used. Some of these ceremonies have already been described and only short accounts will be given of these; in most cases there

20 THREAD-CROSSES IN LEPCHA LAMAIST CEREMONIES

796 are some new details on the composition or use of the
 796 thread-cross.

1. THE CHERIM CEREMONY

796 This ceremony, consisting of three parts, takes place
 796 twice a year in honour of the mountain god of Kanchenjunga
 796 (*Gangs chan mdzod Inga*, "The five glacier treasures"),
 as well as for appeasing evil spirits, to protect the crops from
 hail and men from diseases. It is partly performed by Mun,
 partly by lamas, who officiate during the last third of the rite.
 As a description of the ceremony itself has already been
 given previously,²¹ we shall mention here only the third part
 of the rite and the form of the thread-cross used herein.

796 This part is performed by the lamas who direct their
 796 sacrifice to all the gods and demons; the main sacrifice
 796 is made to the mountain god Kanchenjunga²² and the
 796 "gods of the plains". The essential part of the rite consists
 in erecting a *den*, the construction of which starts some four
 hours earlier. The *den* consists of nine storeys, made of
 blue, red, yellow and white thread.²³ This thread-cross is
 called *mamoo yam den*.

796 The Lepcha lamas explain that this structure is erected
 796 to appease the malignant ghost of a Tibetan king, who was
 796 called Dayom Panoh, "king Dayom". During his lifetime
 796 enemies destroyed his palace and when he died his ghost
 started roaming around and harming people out of revenge.
 The *den* should provide a nine-storied palace and entice
 him to return to Tibet.

796 Besides the *den*, an image of a female supernatural
 796 being, called *mamoo*, is erected. The effigy of the *mamoo*
 796 is made out of ground millet and buckwheat dough. The
 796 *mamoo* is represented with outstretched hands, riding a
 tiger. On her breast she is wearing a necklace, made of
 butter, while the lower part of her body is covered by a
 garment, indicated by scratches in the dough. The super-
 natural being has snakes instead of hair and wears a five-lo-
 bed crown, apparently similar to that worn by Tantric lamas.

This image is placed upon a base, formed by covering a bamboo stretcher with earth and bracken and superimposing upon it squares of turf, each smaller than the other, with the grass facing down. The nine-storied *deu* is planted into the topmost turf immediately behind the figure. On the lower steps of the base, a great number of cones made of dough and covered with pieces of coloured cotton is placed. These cones, called *diget*, represent the servants of the *mamoo*. On the four corners of the second layer, four *yeu* are planted: in front in the right-hand corner blue, on the left white, in the rear left yellow and in the rear right red. In the topmost layer as well as into the second one, several flat wooden sticks, called *Tamsing* by the Lepchas, and small sticks bearing tufts of wool—termed *pong* or *bamgyal*—are planted. On the lowest step, a wall called *po ryum*, with a gap in front; is erected around the last turf square. Opposite this gap, inside the enclosure, four small vessels containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. On the right and left outside of the wall, crossed arrows and spindles are stuck into the base, the arrows being put on the right, the spindles on the left, when facing the structure. According to the explanation given by the priests, the arrows represent the male element, while the spindles stand for the female. Finally, various flowers are put around the lowest base. [83]

The ceremony is continued by offering food and various objects to the *mamoo* and other spirits and then by chanting of prayers. Towards the evening, when the ceremony comes to an end, the *deu* with the dough images is carried across three streams and then thrown away. If the images are eaten by animals within three days, it is regarded as a sign that the gods were pleased with the offerings made to them; if the effigies remain untouched, bad fortune may be expected in the near future.

There are several similarities to be found between this Lepcha rite and old Tibetan religious customs and thoughts. The name of the special thread-cross, *mamoo yam deu*, is derived from Tibetan. Indeed, one of the Tibetan thread- [77] 796 776 778

72 THRED-CROSSES IN LEPCHA LAMAIST CEREMONIES

- 177 crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*"
 and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*.
 ● 796 This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form,
 776 as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction.
 778 The *ma mo*'s are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and
 terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in
 Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo*'s (*ma mo*
chhen mo) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.²⁴
 Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and
 as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning
 tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most
 probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group
 of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross
yam—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression
 for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in
 the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes
 the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As
 already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan
 word *mDos*.

- 796 It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-
 storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the
 778 Bön religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine
 801 headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.²⁵ The colour
 of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*²⁶ and espe-
 822 cially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which
 are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is
 nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four
 main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East
 white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green
 (red) and North black (yellow).

- 796 As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not
 possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it
 775 may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently
 171 made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said
 that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag*
po, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a
 black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.²⁷

It has already been mentioned that some of the symbolism of the Tibetan thread-crosses corresponds to that of the Buddhist Chotens.¹ In the present case the four steps, formed by the bamboo-bracken fern base and the three squares of turf, correspond to the four steps of a Choten. The Lepcha name for these steps, *bangrim*, is identical with the respective Tibetan expression, *bang rim*. 796 ● 778 171

Several of the other implements used in this ceremony are also well known from ancient Tibetan rites. Thus the wooden slabs, which are planted into the turf on the side of the main effigy and which are called *tamsing* by the Lepchas, are identical with the Tibetan *khram shing*, already mentioned. As for the *pong* or *bangyal*—the former word appears to originate from Lepcha, while the latter was derived from Bön terminology—the sticks carrying tufts of wool, we know that wool was used frequently by Bön priests. Thus those *bonpos*, who belonged to a sect called *sNang gshen*, had tufts of wool on their foreheads, while those of the *hPhrul gshen*, sect used coloured thread of wool as their emblem. Adherents of the last mentioned sect are reported as having been especially efficient in the construction of *mDos* and *Yas*.²² 796 171

We find a parallel for the connection between arrows and thread-crosses in a recently published *thang-ka* (painted scroll) of the Mongolian war god. On the lower part of this picture there is a hand, consisting of alternating thread-crosses and arrows.²³ Another similarity is perhaps the use of flowers, as a group of "Bön flowers" is mentioned in Bön scriptures. Finally, the ritual throwing away of the effigies also occurs in an important ancient ceremonies of Bön origin, called *lTo* or *gTo*, in which an effigy, regarded as a scape-goat, (*glud*²⁴) is thrown away.

2. CEREMONY FOR KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS

At the beginning of the rite a basket is filled with earth and on top of it three concentric, decreasing, square turfs are placed. The basket, arranged in this way, is called 776 778

¹[See cat. 116, p. 67. — *Analyst*]

74 THREAD-CROSSES IN LEPCHA LAMAIST CEREMONIES

- 796 *run* by the Lepchas. In the centre of the topmost base
 798 a dough image is placed together with a big white *deu*. The
 796 image is said to represent the spirit "King Gebu". He is
 accompanied by four lesser supernatural beings and one minister. All six images are made of rice dough. On the four corners of the square, four *Yeu* are placed, two white in front, a red and a yellow one in the rear. To each of these four *you* two *tamsing* and two *pong* are added, together with a strip imprinted with nine birds. On the step below, nine cones are placed, representing four ministers and five servants. Again, a band with representations of nine land animals is added. On the third storey, a great number of small images, representing male and female spirits, is placed. Into the lowest storey, eight arrows and eight spindles are planted and finally the whole structure is surrounded by various flowers. Later five cups, filled with Lepcha beer, tea and some bitter tasting liquid, are placed in front and several other implements, among them another image made of rice and with butter ornaments, are laid near the main *deu*. After burning incense, the officiating priests pray to the gods, to spare the population from illness.

796 As in the first rite, the number nine plays an important
 791 part and we find here again the various objects, which were
 said to be originally used in the ceremonies of the Bonpos.

3. SACRIFICE TO THE HAIL-DEMON DEBRONG PANOH

- 796 Debrong Panoh, "King Debrong", is a hail and thunder
 796 supernatural being who must be propitiated to prevent
 796 hail from ruining the crops. He is pictured as having
 796 nine faces, eighteen hands and a thousand eyes. His ritual
 is similar to that of Gebu Panoh. First a basket, with
 straw or dry leaves on the bottom, is filled with earth and
 afterwards again three concentric squares of turf are put
 on top. In the centre of the topmost square a dough image
 of Debrong Panoh is placed. This effigy, however, in contrast to the verbal description, has only one head and two hands. It holds a bow and a rope—perhaps the Tibetan
 1 [See cat. 116, p. 72. - Analyst]

ritual snare, *Zhags pa*—in the left hand and an umbrella as well as an arrow in the right. The image of Debrong Panoh is accompanied by four effigies, representing his four ministers, which are placed in the four corners of the top square. On the second, third and fourth stage stand images of servants and lesser male and female supernatural beings; in front of the altar five cups containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. Finally, all sorts of grain are thrown into the basket and small twigs of various useful fruit trees are set around it. When the first part of the ceremony is finished, two images of Debrong Panoh's parents are made and set on two wooden plates. The image of Debrong Panoh's father is called *chien lut*, that of his mother *look lut*. Then three pots, filled with tea, milk and strained beer, are put in front of each image and afterwards a white *yew*, together with two *tamsing* and *pong* is set on the table of Debrong Panoh's father. Likewise, a white *yew*, again with two *tamsing* and two *pong* is placed upon the tray of the *look lut*. Then a multi-coloured *deu* is placed on the image of Debrong Panoh itself, as well as four smaller thread-crosses in the four corners of the topmost square. The two *yew*, which are set in front, are both white, those behind red and blue. Again, each *yew* is accompanied by two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Now the basket, containing the main image, is put upon a low table in front of the main structure, while the wooden plates with the images of Debrong Panoh's parents are placed to its right and left sides. Two pots filled with water are added—"for the gods to wash their hands and faces"—and two containers full of rice and again a cup filled with water—"for the gods to drink"—and then some strained Lepcha beer, cooked meat and rice are mixed together in a vessel by the officiating lama. Afterwards, while prayers are chanted to the accompaniment of music of the temple orchestra, offerings of rice and water are thrown out to the gods and finally a path, leading from the basket to the door, is made with powder. When this is finished, the central *deu* is removed from the basket and

76 THREAD-CROSSES IN LEPCHA LAMAIST CEREMONIES

776 carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

776 This rite contains some of the Bön elements mentioned before ; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bön deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

755 (5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two 777 *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon 776 a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

755 (6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child, a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that 777 besides other rites a red thread-cross, called *Tsen Deu*, 778 should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical 171 with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.²¹

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

755 After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect 801 a *lorma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a 776 tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the Tibetan *Rube*, *Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)²², is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way :

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITO* rites—is performed.¹ An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), “transferring the nine-faced *bDud*- demon”. A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Pad-masambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet.

10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *lorma* as well as a *you* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*.

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po ngo gsum*), “the black three-headed one”. It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *You* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are

¹[see cat. 116, p. 79. — Analyst]

82 THREAD-CROSSES IN LEPCHA LAMAIST CEREMONIES

755 placed behind the two upraised arms. A cloth, in its shape
 778 similar to that worn by dancers in Tibetan religious dances,
 171 is hung upon its shoulders. As a comprehensive description
 of further details of this image is available elsewhere⁴⁰
 we would merely draw notice to the detail that the navel of
 the effigy is formed by a tortoise with a magic diagram upon
 its belly. This tortoise was described when speaking about
 the sacrifice to the hail demon Debrong Panoh. This rite
 also corresponds to the Tibetan *lTo* ceremonies and is
 regarded by the Tibetans as being purely of Bonpo origin.

12. KILLING THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT AROT MOONG, WHICH
CAUSES VIOLENT DEATH

796 For this ceremony, a big horse and four smaller ones,
 778 all carrying riders on their back are made of millet dough,
 coloured red. Behind each rider, a red *you* together with
pong sticks is planted and the smaller images are then placed
 into the four corners of a wooden plate, while the bigger
 image is put into the centre. In front of this a black figure
 of the *mamoo* is placed, together with an inflated animal's
 bladder. Other objects used in this ceremony are symbols
 of the 12 years cycle, four pots containing scrapings of iron,
 tree tips, poison and water from five rivers and various
 crops in leaf plates, prickly plants, and again arrows
 and spindles. The rest of this ceremony is described in
 [776] *Himalayan Village* (p. 352). The four red images of riders
 [777] seem to represent spirits, related to or identical with the
bTsan demons of the Tibetans, who imagine these super-
 natural beings as ferocious riders of red colour. The red
 thread-cross would be then the *bTsan mdos* (or *tsen deu* of
 the Lepchas), as used in rite no 3.

13. THE SHIDOOK KYOB CEREMONY

[774] If it is assumed that a person's death was caused by
 776 the demon called Shidook Moong, the ceremony called Shidook
 778 Kyob has to be performed. As this rite has already been
 [see cont. 116 p. 78. - Analysis]

described," we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yes*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bön elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bön religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

- 1 Spelled *Bon* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancient Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz: *Die tibetische Bon Religion*, Archiv für Völkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 26-68 (Bibliography).
- 2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy: *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1913., and by G. Lindblom: *Thread-crosses (Fadenkreuze)*, particularly in South America and Africa, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.
- 3 The main works consulted are:
 Das S. Ch. : 'The Bon Religion', *JASB*, Calcutta 1881 (p.196)
 SCHLAGINTWERT, E. : 'Le Bouddhisme au Tibet', *Annales du Musée Guimet*, Paris 1881 (Plate XXXVII)

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
 [38] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
 291 a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
 301 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
 with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
 the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
 reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
 turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
 garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
 tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
 flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
 old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
 [43] by be Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
 ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
 chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "D^ongpön"
 (ir dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
 [52] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
 rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
 shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
 bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
 family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
 Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
 [46] one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by

756 a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
 771 that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
 dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-
 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named:
 amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
 healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the
 [76] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
 of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
 of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
 a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere-
 monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
 appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
 the priests during which they used magic.

opinion that RUM has no wife. But other names used for the Supreme God are expressive of the belief that he had a wife. Han-bu-ni Mun said, "Sa-dzug-rum has a wife by the name of Gor-song-mu." Sa-liang, son of the Bong-thing Ong-di, contradicts this statement, "Sa-dzug-rum has no wife, but he has four help-mates. These are the four spirits who cause disquiet and unrest in the world. They have to be appeased by sacrifices which we perform twice a year. Sa-dzug-rum is not the god of creation, which took place through another god." 776
782

Stocks writes, "It appears that there were five original deities: It-mo and her husband Pa-sandi, their children, Nazong-gnyu and Takbo-thing and Tashe-thing, the son of the former. In these creative power is attributed to the female deities, It-mo and Nazong-gnyu (note 1). The latter (Pasandi) is only mentioned once, and as apparently there is much confusion between the functions of him and of his son, Takbo-thing, it would be difficult to establish his real nature."³³ The same confusion exists between Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. We may note however that a female deity, contrary to the belief of Goror, is never regarded as a Supreme Being. Goror considers It-bo-mo to be female,³⁴ but we have seen that It-bo or Ayit-bo means the god of creation. The Dān-si Bong-thing from Ka-fār says, "In the beginning there was only the God, RUM. He had no special name. The demons Mung were non-existent at the time. Then came the first pair of deities, Agek-rum and Alat-rum, the god and goddess of procreation. Then too, there existed Ta-she-thing and Tak-bo-thing. There was besides, It-bo and his wife De-bo. It-bo was the god of creation who created the first man, Ti-gung-tik." We did not come across the concept of a goddess as the Highest Being in all the Lepcha mythology, but we found certain very definite evidences of the belief that the Supreme God has a wife (cfr. genealogy of God p. 60).

Another important god is Pam-rum, the god of the hunters. He is also called, among other names, Dju-thing or Pong-rum. Dju-thing is honoured as a threefold being. In the highest 776
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33. op. cit. p. 237.

34. op. cit. p. 236.

793 The Han-bu-ni from Git-hiyong gives us a rather detailed report of her initiation. "My maternal grandmother was a Mun. At the age of nine I fell ill and commenced speaking
[757] a variety of languages. The people said, 'It is the spirit of
[775] her grandmother, the Mun let, who speaks through her.' So my parents summoned a Bong-thing who performed the sacrifice of initiation, offering a bullock, a pig and a goat. Thereafter I was apprenticed to a female Mun for a period of three years during which time I was taught the prayers, the traditions and the ceremonies. After the completion of my apprenticeship the sacrifice was renewed. I was given full powers and began to sacrifice independently. Should
[782] I desire to conjure up my spirit, I offer chi, butter, and incense in sacrifice and the spirit quickly responds to my summons to appear. I notice at first a blurred object, like a cloud of dust approaching me. My heart tells me that the spirit is near."

This woman, who is over eighty years of age today, and is Mun as well as Andshemu, has recently become a
[797] Christian. We asked her whether the old spirit did not haram her for having given up her former priesthood and ceased to honour it. "Not at all. The spirit does not torment me in the least," she replied. Later she proudly said to the Lepchas, "It is my privilege to instruct this great European priest who comes from China and Tibet, in the teachings of the Mun and the Bong-thing." She was very pleased to find us interested in the old traditions. She knew a little Tibetan, and loved to converse with us in that language.

● 796 A Rong woman, whose father and brother are both Bong-thing, has narrated to us the following story, "In the evening my father drank chi. This made him excited
[535] and he danced through the night. Very often three more Bong-thing came to our house and they all danced together. That is customary with the Mun and the Bong-thing. In the neighbourhood there are three women and two men who hold their dances by turns in each other's houses. This dance festival must take place at least three times a year ; —in April at the barley harvest ; in September at the first
[778] millet harvest, and finally in October at the second millet
[782] harvest. Torma (Tibetan expression for sacrificial images)

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of rice and butter are in the first instance brought forward. These are offered with little roasted birds, fish, incense and chi, and in addition a rupee in money. Prior to the actual offering, garlands of flowers are prepared and hung up in the house. The flowers are called "Sa-gi." "Amial" means garlands, and it is from these that the festival derives its name "Sa-gi-sa-amial." The god of power is also called "Sa-gi." "Sa-gi-fat" means sacrifice and annual festival. After the performance of the sacrifice the men and women begin to dance, and during the dance they sometimes fall to the ground and twitch and tremble. They are then lifted up and continue with the dance. The onlookers keep watch to ensure that none of the dancers escapes from the room. The spirit of my father who is now dead has passed over to my brother, Sa-ho."

Next comes the actual vocation. This always takes place during an illness when the physical powers of the patient are at a low ebb. We had the opportunity of observing the case of a girl who was, however, not a Lepcha but a Kami. The sequence of events is nonetheless identical. The child is said to be possessed by a Limbu spirit and at such times she speaks the Limbu language. The people, therefore, insist that she must become a soothsayer. The girl gets epileptic fits and froths at the mouth. The nerves are upset and distraught and the people see in all this a case of possession by the spirit. The girl still is with her parents and prays each day at definite times to the spirit and renders it homage. At a later stage the girl is brought to a teacher; not however to a Lepcha teacher, but to a Nepalese magician, since a Lepcha will not teach a member of another tribe.

All those who receive this summons from the spirit must necessarily answer the summons and go to a teacher who will give them the required initiation, instruction, practices, and teach them the prayers. A great sacrifice, mentioned by the Han-bu-ni Mun above, has to be performed by way of initiation. Gorer describes this ceremony as follows, "In the house a little table is set up. On it to the right lies a scarf of honour with a rupee. In the middle is a wooden vessel which is filled with chi and garnished with butter round the rim. On the right is a stone incense-burner filled with Tibetan

793 incense, and dry twigs from the cypress tree. In front of
 796 the little table is a winnowing on which parts of the animal
 [792 sacrifices are arranged in the following manner: opposite
 787 the vessel is the skull turned towards the table. Behind it
 are the entrails. To the left of the skull is a hind leg, to the
 front is a foreleg. Between the foreleg and the entrails is
 a thigh with a little meat. When everything is arranged,
 the teacher sits behind the table a little to the left, in front of
 the scarf. His pupil sits on his right. Then he lays the scarf
 on the pupil's hand and recites the prayers, which the appren-
 tice repeats after him sentence by sentence. Then the master
 makes a ceremonial speech to the initiated in which he
 explains: 'Now the price for the freeing of your body is paid
 to the demon, but under one condition, that you consecrate
 your life to the Mun-god, and that you offer up your body
 as his dwelling place.' After this speech he hands the vessel
 filled with the chi to his pupil so that he can drink from it
 three times from three different places. This drinking of the
 chi from the vessel garnished with butter stands for the actual
 ritual consecration. With this the pupil is bound for three
 years to study with his master. At the end of the instruction,
 a second sacrifice of a bullock is performed. With this the
 pupil is given full powers and can function independently.

782 The most important sacrificial offering for all these
 796 ceremonies is the bullock. An ox is desirable. If a pig
 is given the neophyte will be unable to expel Lom-doon-moong
 [793 (the devil of Jaundice). If a goat, he will be unable to expel
 776 Mat-moong, (the devil who produces various unpleasant
 symptoms which are the results of ancestral quarrels)."⁴⁰

783 According to our investigations, the Mun and the Bong-
 thing are both equally powerful magicians. They only,
 can expel demons and appease the gods through sacrifice.
 Both, men as well as women, can be Mun. The Mun spirit
 is not a female spirit but can choose either men or women as
 its servants. The Bong-thing can only be a man. The Mun
 [778 and the Bong-thing whom we were able to observe, do not
 293 wear any special ceremonial dress or ornaments during their
 534 activities, neither do they use the double skull-drum (damaru)

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.⁸⁸

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight."

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

88. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

793
 796 walk in the courtyard. (Were anybody else to put on the neck-
 [78] lace on me the gods would be angry, and the rash man would
 receive the burden of the gods.) When I return everybody
 is hushed even the children.

I blow into each person's face and on the offering ;
 [78] then I scatter chi and prophesy in a loud and audible voice
 the things which are going to take place in the following half
 year. After the prophecy, I recover consciousness ; but not
 till cock crow next day do I feel all right again.

755 When I am called in the case of an illness, the god
 does not fully enter me but I see the devil which is attacking
 the sick person either in the form of some animals or insect
 or person, depending on which devil it is. Thus Lum-dong-
 mong appears in a pig, Sor-moong as a dirty ragged old woman,
 [776] Arot-moong as a red butterfly. I see these visions out of the
 [78] corner of my eye ; if I look directly there is nothing there.
 But I watch these devils carefully out of the corner of my eye ;
 if they go away without eating anything the patient will
 recover quickly ; but if they take food the patient will probably
 die though I only tell him that the illness is very serious."⁸⁹
 (fig. 19.)

(h) THE SACRIFICES OF THE MUN AND THE BONG-THING

755 We had the opportunity of being present at and observing
 782 the sacrifice for a sick woman, by the Lha-ba Bong-thing
 (who is also a Pau). This sacrifice is called Mung-zug-fat.
 Mung-zug means "to cast out demons" ; "fat" is sacrifice.
 To start with, all the things necessary for the sacrifice are
 kept in readiness. The Torma of rice and butter are arranged.
 The chi containers are filled, the butter-lamps are put up ;
 incense and holy water are kept ready. A bullock is then
 brought near the front door of the house. A rope is tied to
 its right horn and the other end of the rope is taken into the
 house, and the sick woman is asked to hold it in her hand.
 The Bong-thing then comes near the ox and says, "Instead
 of the life of the woman, take the life of the ox. I am giving
 you the life of this ox in lieu of the life of this woman. His

⁸⁹, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

During the prayer, the one who performed the sacrifice⁷⁵⁵ added the expression "lang nam" in chosen places; it means⁷⁸² "the year of the bull," because the sick person was born in the^[805] year of the bull. Lang is the Tibetan expression for the Zodiac bull. As the prayer ended, the assistant took some of^[774] the sacrificial meat, rice and chi and offered it to Me-sum-mung, the demon who represents the life-principle.

And so the sacrifice came to an end. The portions of meat were cleared away. The fore and hind legs and the valuable^[713] parts were given to the priest. The remainder of the meat, as also the skin, were sold in order to enable the family to make^[432] a little money. A very small portion of the meat was eaten immediately after the sacrifice. These sacrifices involve a heavy expenditure for the family; often many sacrifices are offered for the same illness if it is protracted, and this causes the ruin of many people. Hence many prefer to invite the lamaistic⁷⁷² monks of the Brug-pa sect, because they are willing to drive out demons of illness at lesser expense.

A female Mun, Mai-li-mo-la-dza-ni, whose personal⁷⁹³ name is Chin-dün, and who lives near Git-biyong described a similar sacrificial ceremony to us which she holds at the⁷⁹⁶ ripening of the millet crop. The preparatory arrangements⁷⁸² for the sacrifice are the same as mentioned above, with the following differences: There are only five Tormas for the five^[778] deities namely: Sa-dzug-rum, the sun god who is regarded⁷⁷⁴ as the Supreme Being, Ni-gung-mön, his wife, Ta-dik-köb, the son, Nyom, the daughter-in-law, and San-tug-kan-dro-mu. There are again two lamps, but five bamboo containers containing chi, five banana leaves with rice, five varieties of meat, and incense, and holy water containers. She is helped by her personal spirits who are Darmit, Dartik, Sang-mu, Dang-mu-rum, Asog-rum, Tzang-rum. The sacrifice progresses in the same sequence as above. This Mun was twenty years old when she fell ill with heart trouble. The Bong-thing A-du said to her, "You must become Mun." She was an apprentice to the female Mun Dja-ge-mo. In addition to her^[293] Mun belief, she also practises Lamaism, and has a little prayer wheel and prayer cord. We could not obtain the text of the prayers used in her sacrifice.

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[76]

But we fail to understand it. We are naked at the time of our birth. Now too we are naked. When time will cease for us, the time of our death, it is impossible to say. We cannot give any news of the land of the gods. And at the time God calls us, mother and father cannot call us back. When the day of death is at hand, neither elder brothers, sisters, children nor daughters-in-law can call us back. When the day of the Lord dawns, then indeed has death passed away."^{82c} The sacrificial texts quoted give us an idea of their vast varieties.

(i) OTHER SACRIFICES

- 796 Although the Mun and the Bong-thing wield such a great
782 influence over and dominate the whole sacrificial organisation, there are all the same, some sacrifices which do not come within their sphere.

An old Lepcha said to us, "For our original sacrifice we, the Rong folk, offer the intoxicating drink Chi, in a wooden vessel together with rice and small dried birds on a banana leaf-plate. The Chi had to be prepared by a young girl who [78] was still a virgin. The little birds had to be shot by a young lad who had had no sexual relations with anyone. The

[53]

66c go yu ma dyak ne

But we do not understand it.

djek go rung a gūn do

At the time of our birth we are naked.

djek lo tang ka tsāid ga la a gūn
at present time we are also naked.lo tang gām
When our time is overamix sa sut de dön ma gūn
to tell the time of our death, that is not possible.rum lyang sa sut ma gūn
To give news of the land of the gods is not possible.rum nōng lo lek dö tsāid ga abu amu lin ma gūn Chiang chia
At the time when God calls us, father and mother cannot call us.pe pō lad Chiang gam anam anōm akōb ason
When the day of death is coming, elder brothers, elder sisters, children andnyom li ma top ang ni rum sa ang ni tag nam che lat non
daughter-in-law can no longer call us. When the day of God is coming, then
is death passing away."

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sacrifice is called Rum-fat or Lyang-rum-fat. It is performed once a year in honour of Rum or Pum-thing-rum somewhere in December or January. The flesh of the little birds can be dispensed with at this sacrifice, but the rice and Chi are essential. Generally it is the master of the house who is also the family priest who performs the sacrifice, but it can be performed by anyone who understands the rites."⁸³

Sam-sing from Maria-Basti has described to us the hunter's sacrifice in the following terms: "The Supreme God whom we honour originally was called Assal. We do not know any more where he lives, and so each tribe honours its own god of the hunters. In the Yok-song-mo tribe to which I belong we practise the cult of the Mut. For this we keep cocks. Whenever we go out a-hunting we take a cock and present it to the god of the hunters. After the hunt the cock is killed and sacrificed to the god, and its flesh is consumed by us.

A part of the game killed at every hunt has to be offered to Mut. We cut little pieces from each part of the body of the animal wrap them up in leaves and offer them up to the god. After the sacrifice has been offered we eat the meat ourselves. No woman is ever allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Mut." Another member of the Rong tribe called this god of the hunters by the name of Dju-thing. He honours him in the manner described above. He also stressed the fact that a woman is never allowed to take part in, nor even to look on, this sacrifice to the hunting god.

Gorer describes a sacrifice which all hunters offer together in the month of October, viz. the sacrifice to Mut-rum-Tseu or Pong-rum, the protector of wild animals and patron of hunters. The wife of this god is called Shing-rum. The sacrifice consists of roasted corn, chi, dried fish and birds, ginger, arum roots and a few other tubers, sugar-cane, banana, and worm-wood flowers. No woman is allowed to know what is being prepared. She is not allowed to come near. The presence of a woman who is having her menstrual period is regarded as particularly dangerous. Chi must be prepared by a virgin or she should at least pour it into a vessel. The birds must be procured by a chaste youth. If a deer has

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 [784] been killed, then it is imperative that a sacrifice to the hunting god must be performed. The animal is already carved up in the forest. To quote Gorer : "Big leaves are cut and put on the ground and then the animal is divided up and the head is put in front with a foreleg and third leg on either side and singed intestines in the middle. This is all offered to Pong-rum, and the hunter crouching behind and speaking very softly and slowly, gently throws the burnt intestines bit by bit over the animal's head. On his return to the village great care must be taken to see that no woman sees the animal's head ; if she does, the hunter will have no success in future."⁶⁴

The sacrifice of the hunters are a replica of the primitive sacrificial ceremonies. There is, however, a new element which comes to the forefront in the present sacrifices, viz. the strict exclusion of all women ;—the women may not even be spectators, or even so much as see the head of the animal which has been killed and which is to serve as a victim at the sacrifice. The virginity of the youth and the maiden who prepare the sacrificial materials, is strongly emphasised. Such hunting sacrifices are well known among many primitive tribes in India, e.g. among the Irulas, Kurumbas, etc.

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 713 The Rong believe that the bow and arrow which they require for hunting are given to them by the deity, and that even the game is, so to say, given over to them by the deity. This enables us to get a better idea of the sacrifice to the god of the hunters. One of the legends recorded by Stocks runs as follows, "Once upon a time Tashey-thing made friends with Mon-tsu-mot, a wild she-boar whom he married and with whom he lived happily for ten years. Not far away from their home was a great rock hanging over a precipice where a rock bee (vot) had its hive, and Tashey-thing wished to bring the honey home one day himself. It was a very dangerous task to reach the rock even with the aid of a rope ; and Tashey-thing, being helped by many animals and insects, made them all swear to hold the rope firmly and not to let it go. But his wife Mon-tsu-mot was not faithful, and wished to get rid of Tashey-thing.

64. op. cit. p. 244 sq.

renders homage to the god of the hunters in order that he may obtain his protection. 776
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The following sacrifices which are associated with agriculture and the harvest are of a completely different type. We have already had occasion to mention Se-dyu, the goddess of farming. She elects women only and passes on from mother to daughter. The women perform sacrifices in her honour at least twice a year—before the sowing in the springtime and after the harvest in autumn. 796 ●
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The pig and the cock serve as sacrificial victims. For this sacrifice the pig comes first in the order of preference, while in the ceremonies described above we have seen that the bull is given the special preference. The understanding of this factor helps to dispel the apparent contradiction that exists in the opposing claims of some Lepchas who maintain that the pig is the most valued of all animals and others who assert that the cattle are the most valued. It all depends on the type of sacrifice which is being offered at a particular moment. In the very early days they did not employ cattle to plough with; cattle were harnessed very much later. The sacrifice is performed inside the house in a corner. The man can be present if a woman performs the sacrifice, and the man can even perform the sacrifice when the woman is, for some reason, prevented from performing it. [231
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Apart from these private sacrifices to the god of agriculture, there are also ceremonies performed at festivals and solemnised by all. There are spring and autumn sacrifices. These are associated with the ancestors of Mayal, who as we saw earlier, provided mankind with the first seeds, and instructed them about the manner of cultivation. "The people of Mayal are worshipped exclusively in connection with the crops of rice, millet and maize; on all other occasions they are markedly excluded from the long list of supernaturals who are called on to partake of the sacrifices and give their blessings. Everybody must worship them on two occasions, after the completion of the sowing and at the harvesting of the dry rice; in these houses where there is a Mun or a knowledgeable old man, they are also prayed to in the winter to keep away snow and hail, in the spring to protect young crops and

- 796 after the sowing of each of their grains, they are offered sakyou-
782 fast to ensure a good harvest.

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776] Only the three crops are connected with the people of Mayal; the others come from different supernaturals, barley, wheat, buckwheat, and wet rice come from Kongen-bu, the god of Kinchenjunga, a Sikkimese deity; no important ceremonies are connected with these crops. Cardamum, as has already been said, comes from Nepal and is under the patronage of the foreign Elaiji-nyou, who dislikes women, in particular menstruating women. The people of Mayal are said to share this dislike and should a menstruating woman visit them there would be the terrible result that all the people of Mayal would fall asleep and would not send the migratory birds.⁷¹

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171] The spring sacrifice is simple. The autumn sacrifice on the contrary is very copious. For this an old experienced man is elected to represent the ancestors of Mayal and he is called Mayal-mu. A woman is selected to represent the Talyeu-mu, the sister earth. When the ceremony cannot be completed on the same day, those taking part in it stay with each other for the night. There is free intercourse between the sexes; however, the comprehensive ban on incestual relations is not broken. This recalls the sexual freedom which is indulged in at the festivals of Spring and Autumn among many Asiatic peoples and which we observed in the Tibet-Chinese province Tsing-hai among Chinese, Tujen Tibetans, etc. The representation of ancestors and agricultural spirits by masquerading in their guise is again a well-known custom among Asiatic primitives usually connected with the New Year festivals. Thus the sacrifices of the hunters and of the cultivators stand out in sharp contrast with each other.

[242] The Lepcha, Suliman, gave us informatin about another family sacrifice to the Supreme God, Ta-she-thing. Anyone who knows the rites may perform it, whether it be a man or a woman. The one who performs it must fast for three days before the ceremony, i.e. he must not eat the chief meal of rice but he can eat the other dishes. During this time he must [15] take three baths. The bathing place is prepared near the

71. Gorer, op. cit. 238 sq.

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river. The bath consists of a complete immersion. After the last bath he comes into the house to perform the sacrifice. ⁷⁸²
[796] [515]

An altar about 80 centimetres high is erected, and bananas and roots which serve as offerings are placed on it. Flowers are placed on either side. This sacrifice takes place in September. Many people assemble for it, and they later partake of food and millet beer.

One kind of sacrifice consists simply of the action of the man, who before drinking either millet beer or tea, sprinkles some drops with his fingers.⁷³

(j) PARALLELS TO THE MYTHS AND THE RITUAL OF THE RONG

The intoxicating drink plays an important part in all the sacrifices offered by the Rong. One kind is Chi, a brew of millet. The second is Dyö, an alcoholic drink, which is made not of millet but of different components. In all the sacrificial texts and rites a special importance is attached to this stimulant. As the text indicates, there is an individual deity personifying the intoxicating drink, viz. Dön-dyö-chi-log, who [776] is also represented among the Tormas and is rendered the same homage as the Supreme God and his family. This intoxicating drink according to the tradition of the Rong is of heavenly origin. Tradition has it that at the very outset the ferment used in the manufacture of the intoxicant was brought to mankind from the other side of the world in a cunning manner by a special messenger. Immortality, too, is linked up with this drink. Birds have a special part to play in connection with both these drinks. The quail is considered to have performed the Chi sacrifice after the deluge. Two birds are said to have fetched the drink of immortality from the land of the gods. Then a two-fold effect which causes merriment is described. When the snakes drank Chi, they went mad. To quote Stocks, "You have stolen my ferment, if you only know how to use it, you would be able to offer the 'chi' to the Rum, but now you will find that it always excites you, it will cause you all to quarrel, it may even perhaps kill you." ⁷⁷³
[796] [776]

73. Cf. op. cit. p. 344.

273 But the wasp started to make 'chi' as he brought the ferment
 ● 796 back, and all the Rum came but none dared taste it, as they
 778 did not know what would happen to the first one who drank.

Then the pa-vin-bu volunteered to try it first (and he is the snake who springs from trees). As soon as he had drunk a little, he became mad, and commenced to fly, and some of his friends went to look after him. They found however that he was not dying, and another snake—one that is black, the pa-mol-bu, drank and also became mad. He went into a cave and some of his friends went in to look after him but they found he was only snoring.

Then a third snake—one that is poisonous, the pa-hlyok-bu, volunteered. He drank the 'chi' and went away vomiting, and ever since that day he is more poisonous.

Then a fourth offered to taste it—the horned one that has a red head and a black body (tik). She had some and only ran away drunken.

After that there came another snake—the pa-ryob-bu, who only lives in the hills—and when he had gone everyone thought they might try as the poison had by now all gone.⁷⁷⁸

796 For the snakes or demons, this drink has deleterious
 273 effects: for the gods however it is a refreshing drink. Through the Chi sacrifice, i.e. through the enjoyment of the intoxicating drink, they become softened and quiet. To cite an instance: the god in his rage made the flood come down; then softened through the sacrifice of Chi, he let the waters abate. In the traditions of the Rong we do not come across evidences of a god who becomes exhilarated through drinking of the love-potion, as is the case with Indra on drinking Soma.

[797] The magicians work themselves into a frenzy by partaking of Chi, in order to reach a state of ecstasy. The Chi sacrifice is most closely connected with the bull, and is performed on the head of the animal. The sacrificial vessel containing the drink must always be decorated with three little pats of butter.

The Chi sacrifice has an entirely original and individual character and is closely bound up with the life and the ritual

of the Rong. It belongs therefore to their old ancestral estate, and is not borrowed from other peoples. 273
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In the Soma-Haoma sacrifices of the Indians and the Iranians, we find striking parallels. "The conception of a stimulating drink of the gods appears to go back to the Indo-European times. The drink which manifests secret, ecstatic, and exciting power to men, must be an essence of the gods, and a special possession of the gods... The dwelling place of this drink of the gods appears to have been heaven according to Indo-European beliefs.... From its heavenly storage place, the bird of the god, or the god himself in the guise of a bird, fetched or stole it from the jealously watching demons; the eagle of Indra; the nectar carrying eagle of Zeus; Odin who as an eagle carried away mead.... Finally it may perhaps be accepted, that the conception of godlike immortality is already connected at the time of the Indo-Europeans with the drink of the gods (Amrta, Ambrosia). As human life is preserved by taking meat and drink and specially death is warded off for a time, at least by medicine, so must the godly existence also depend on the partaking of a drink whose essence is immortality."⁷⁴ [177]

The sacrifice as the nourishment of the gods is known to the Rong. "Then Tashey-takbo-thing wished to make his first sacrifice to the Rum and called the ngo and the ngo-yong...." 796
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At the offering time the hands and feet of the Tashey-takbo-thing quarrelled with his belly saying, 'We work very hard the whole time, but you, the belly, do nothing.' And the belly replying said, 'Very well then, as you believe that, for two or three days I shall really do nothing. I will rest and shall not eat anything.'

Then the hands became so weak they could do nothing, and were soon unable to move. And the belly said, 'If you find me something to eat, you will find you regain strength and vigour.' And as he ate a little the hands and feet regained strength, and they knew they were defeated. So they planted sugar-cane (mut, pa-mam); pine-apples (bor-pot) and all kinds of fruit which grew abundantly.

74. H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, Stuttgart-Berlin 1917, p. 169 sq.

- 796 And Tashey-takho-thing took a supply of all these fruits
782 with many fish from the river and sacrificed them. This was
[776] the commencement of all offering.⁷⁷⁸

[776] Thus among the Rong, as among the Indo-Iranians the
272 stimulating drink, finally becomes a deity. "Further, the
sacrificial drink filled with daemonic strength,—like the sacri-
ficial fire—has become a mighty god."⁷⁷⁹

But Soma-Haoma is however most intimately bound up with cattle. "Soma is dressed in the cow robe—the admixture of milk in it."⁷⁸⁰ We noticed, among the Rong, the butter decoration on the bowl of Chi.

796 Significant also is the rite by which the Lepchas place the
782 offering of Chi on the forehead of the bull, and so bind more
171 closely together the cult of the stimulant with cattle. All
the same both cults remain autonomous and independent.
This is of special value as it throws more light on the old
Indo-Iranian ritual and sacrifices. Some scholars today
think it is possible to connect the following :

"The cult of the killing of the Soma in the form of little plant shoots in the Vedic sacrifice and the myth of the killing of the Haoma bull in the mythology of Mithra have a broad ethnological connection, and are the Aryan shaping of an ancient prehistorical mythology and cult.... Now if Zarathustra repeatedly declaims with passion and holy anger against the slaughtering of bulls it is not, as has been maintained, for agricultural and utilitarian reasons, but because this ritual act formed the essential constituent part of the old religion. Now within the Soma sacrifice, the highest and most solemn sacrifice of the old Indians, it is clear that the offering of a gift to the gods was not the most essential thing, but the renewal of the original sacrifice of the gods. As the gods in heaven prepare the Soma rain for the good of the world, so does man in the holy ceremony prepare the drink of immortality which stands for rain as the source of life, in order to share in the blessing of the godlike original sacrifice and to make sure of it for himself. And for all the slaughtering of beasts and men, which

778. Stacks, *op. cit.* p. 288.

779. H. Oldenberg, *op. cit.* p. 172.

780. *op. cit.* p. 178.

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Jensen has reported, it is likewise evident, that they occurred as a repetition of that first killing, from which new life was engendered. 796
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Thus it is clear then, that the slaughtering of cattle which Zarathustra again and again condemned, was the imitating and repeating of the indeed cruel, but—blessed killing of the original bull.

And in the closest connection with this, Zarathustra condemned in the same place the Haoma sacrifice, although, it is true he does not mention the name Haoma, but uses instead, an old unmistakable title of the Haoma.

This simultaneous mentioning of the Haoma endorses my opinion that with the words, 'the bull must be killed,' the sacrifice of the bull in the Mitra cult and its cosmic meaning are alluded to." This bull is said to be identical with Haoma.⁷⁷

Very correctly does Lommel lay emphasis on the drawing of ethnological and prehistorical parallels for the explanation of the ritual. Our case is specially instructive for such an interpretation. The beliefs of the Rong and their rites prove beyond the shadow of doubt that the cult of the intoxicating drink and the cult of the bull are not identical, but are two altogether independent cults, and moreover that they are not the imitation of the original offering of the deity itself. Among the oldest ethnological tribes this mystification is not to be found; but it is certainly so among the younger peoples especially among those with the peculiar mystery-religion. Others believe that the intoxicating Haoma has been supplanted by the milk-haoma which links with an old milk-mystery. The Mithra religion is Apolonic, sober, formalistic; the Iranian Gatha-religion on the contrary, is Dionysiac, and is familiar with the Haoma delirium, with ecstasies, trances, and the wandering of souls in a state of trance.

Among the Indo-Iranians the Soma-Haoma sacrifice was performed in spring time for all the gods.⁷⁸ We have pointed out that exactly the same thing happens in the case of the Rong. The Rong-thing and the Mun, by partaking of

77. H. Lommel, *Mithra und das Stieropfer*, in *Paideum*, Bd. III, H. 6/7, Juni 1948, p. 216 sq., p. 212.

78. H. Oldenberg, *op. cit.* p. 440 sq.

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Chi, rouse themselves into a state of ecstasy, and then began their dances and their soul-wanderings in a state of ecstasy.

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A brief description of the manner in which the Rong prepare the intoxicating drink would not be out of place here. Chi is obtained from the small millet. The well-ripened grains are dried in the sun for three days, and then cooked in an earthenware pot which is covered over with a bamboo mat. A larger barrel is inverted over this. After the cooking, the ferment is added, and the fermentation begins. The fermented liquor is left in the sun for several days so that the alcoholic content may become stronger. Finally the grains are squeezed out and the chi-brew is thus obtained. The fermenting grains are then put into a bamboo barrel and warm water is poured over them. This water becomes slightly alcoholic and is sucked in through a little bamboo tube. The method of drinking beer through a little bamboo tube, in order to avoid the impure sediment, is a very old custom indeed, and had been practised by the Hittites. It is a universal practice among the Himalayan peoples.

The other type of alcoholic beverage, Dyō, is made from medicinal roots, herbs, or other fermentable plants. The preparation would depend on the material used in each case. The roots are soaked in warm water, the fermenting agent is added and the whole concoction allowed to ferment. After a few days the molasses is squeezed out. It seems that the preparation of the Soma was similar, but the secret of the extraction has been lost.

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The home of the Soma plants is supposedly the high rocky mountains. "Soma on the rocks"⁷⁹; the eagle robs Soma from the rocks.⁸⁰ It is "an inhabitant of the mountains," a "growth of the mountain world."⁸¹ In one place the name for such a mountain is said to be Mujevat.⁸² According to the Mahabharata (XIV) this was a mountain to the rear of the Himalayas. The plant was also a medicine and was called "Medicine for the sick."⁸³ The medicinal effect was so

79. Rigveda V, 85, 2.

80. op. cit. I, 93, 6.

81. X, 62, 4; XV, 9, 95, 4.

82. X, 34, 1.

83. Rigveda VIII, 73, 17.

lives. The same is true of the different important sacrifices 782 offered in the course of the year.

On the contrary one of the traditions has it that the 773 oldest material for offerings were Chi, the intoxicating drink, dried fish, and small birds. According to other traditions the number of objects is somewhat increased. "Every year we give fish (ngo), game (fo), rice-chi (mor-chi), beaten rice (ta-fa) and ginger (hing.) These are put on banana leaves and are offered at Shara near the Tulung monastery."⁹⁶ Another legend is as follows: "Tashey-takbo-thing took a supply of all these fruits with many fish from the rivers and sacrificed them. This was the commencement of all offerings."⁹⁷ This gives us an insight into the sacrificial practices of a people who live on game and the spoils of the chase, who offer the spoils and the collected eatable plants and fruits. The god of the hunt, Pong-rum, commanded the hunters to perform sacrifices to him.⁹⁸

Completely different are the sacrifices of cattle, pigs and 796 goats which are most closely linked up with the Mun-Bong- 782 thing religion, as we have already seen from the reports of 171 these priests.⁹⁹ But as these sacrifices are a very old custom 231 of the Rong, it is obvious that the cattle offerings are old too. The cattle are, indeed, the Asiatic mountain Zebu, which have small horns and a rudimentary hump. In these days the Lepchas practise various methods of killing the victims. "Cattle are usually killed with a bow and arrow, shooting from very near, sometimes they are stoned or killed with a pointed knife. Pigs and goats are killed with a pointed knife if there is one, otherwise with a piece of sharpened bamboo."¹⁰⁰ The cattle are killed at the same time by the blow of an axe in the nape of the neck.

The sacrificing of cattle plays an important part in the 796 ritual of many Asiatic mountain people. The Northern 782 Sangtam tribe in Assam are familiar with such sacrifices 171 during which beer is an important stimulant. Among the

96. Stocks, op. cit. p. 258.

97. op. cit. p. 356.

98. Cf. above p. 77.

99. Cf. p. 58 sq.

100. Gorer, op. cit. p. 105.

- 796 Lakher, the Mithan must be shot with the bow and arrow.
 792 These sacrifices are common among the different Naga
 171 tribes.¹⁰¹ Lepchas, who during the war came to these
 parts of the country, state that the practices of these people are
 in many ways similar to and in harmony with their own
 practices.

We find the sacrificing of bulls common to the Thai, the Lolo, the Na-chi and the Tibetans. Cattle and pigs were of primary importance among the animal offerings of ancient China. In Iran, Zarathustra waged fanatical warfare against the cattle killers. In the "Bull Gatha" (29) the soul of the bull complains to the gods that cattle are handed over to the murderous lust of men and prays for help and protection. Ahura-Mazda calls on Zarathustra to provide some protection for the cattle. At the time when the Aryans in India still preserved their nomadic tendencies, they offered bull sacrifices. Aitareya Brahmana (11.1.8) says that men at first had the horse as the principal sacrificial animal. Later, cattle took the place of the horse; the sheep replaced the cow, and in the end cats replaced the sheep. Ultimately, however, plant offerings totally ousted the animal offerings. This is however a subsequent construction. The sacrifices of cattle occur still in modern India and the Brahmins who perform the sacrifice in South India must also eat the flesh that has been offered, and by doing so, they do not violate the rules of the caste.

Already in the Mohenjodaro culture the pictures of bulls are linked with the name of the deity Kusi, Ikusi; they are of the greatest significance and could only originate from the cult motifs. Thus the Rong sacrifices of the bull contribute greatly to the significance which the bull-cult has for mankind.

Very interesting parallels occur between the hunting rites and sacrifices of the Lepchas on the one hand, and the primitive Indian tribes and North-East Asiatic peoples on the other. Just as the Rong believe that their hunt-god, [77] Pong-rum, incarnates himself in the form of bears, the

101. C. R. Stoner, *The Feasts of Merit among the Northern Sangtam Tribes of Assam*, Anthropos, Freiburg, 1960, Vol. XLV p. 1 sq.

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Jakuts, the Sojots, Tungus, etc., regard the bears as deities.¹⁰⁰ These people have almost developed a pronounced bear cult. [776]

This certainly is not the case with the Rong; but even they hold the bear in high esteem and consider it to be the most intelligent and clever of all the wild animals, nay, with traits that bear has a resemblance to human beings. The bear is taboo among some Indian tribes. [725]

The women-folk of these tribes, like the Lepcha women, are strictly excluded from all contact with the game that has been captured for the sacrifice. "The relationship of woman to game is especially delicate among all Siberian peoples. Especially during menstruation or pregnancy, she may easily ruin the luck when men go on a hunt. Further, in her heedlessness she can cause the animals to shy off to another district."¹⁰¹ When the game is being conveyed into the house, a meeting with women must be avoided at all costs. Some tribes do not even permit the game to be taken in through the door because women pass in and out of it. The game is brought in through a window or some other aperture.¹⁰² It is customary among the Golden, as also among the Irulas, not to permit a woman to look at the head of the bear, just as the Rong conceal the head of the game from the eyes of woman. Thus there occur among the hunting people who are now so widely scattered, very great similarities in the hunting rites and usages. The same can be said of their arts of magic.

This similarity is markedly evident in the case of the 796
Mun and Bong-thing of the Rong and the Siberian Shamans. 792
The only difference is, as we have already pointed out, that 171
the Rong do not employ the individual Shaman instruments 793
such as the Shaman drums and the magic daggers. The
Lepchas have certainly preserved the older form. The
vocational calling of the Siberian Shamans and the Rong-
Mun is closely allied. Both men and women are elected.
"Werbinkij mentions in his description of Shamanism in the
Altai district, that the Shaman gift is at the same time an

100. U. Harva, Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaiischen Völker, Helsinki 1938, p. 407 sq.

101. U. Harva, op. cit. p. 412.

102. op. cit. p. 414 sq.

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illness which is hereditary in the family. Numerous examples prove that the Shaman disposition does in fact appear as a kind of illness."¹⁰⁶

Our own studies have brought to light the existence of similar dispositions among the Rong. In both places there is the same conception of the spirits of Shaman. These spirits sometimes take the form of animals, *e.g.*, that of a bull. "His bull-form walks abroad, is also said by the forest Juraks, when the soul of a Shaman has departed to another world."¹⁰⁶ They also bring the deceased into the kingdom of the dead.¹⁰⁷ All these facts run a close parallel to our findings among the Rong and other primitive hunter tribes in India.

Further similarities are found in the mode of consecration and instruction. The Shaman costume however is fundamentally different. The Rong have no special costume, while among the different Siberian peoples, a wide variety of customs are worn.

(k) THE SOCIAL CLASSES OF THE RONG.

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According to the general tradition existent among the Rong, they claim to have been originally a race of hunters, and that in the very early times before the Tibetans, the Bhutanese and the Nepalese had infiltrated into their country, they lived as the free rulers of the immense forests which were their home. The Lepchas have a clear knowledge of the

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animals, the birds, the plants, the fruits and the roots, and can tell which are poisonous and which are edible. Even

today the Lepcha will not starve if the harvest fails, for he will procure as his sustenance the edible leaves, fruits and roots from the forest. One such root is the dayout-buck. After

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being dug up it is broken into small pieces and soaked in water for three days to remove the poison and clear off the lye. A ferment is then added and a kind of beer produced. Another root is the dog-bo or bok-yik. It is cut up, the lye cleared, and then it is cooked and crushed. The broth is eaten like rice. This is of a pale violet colour.

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¹⁰⁵ op. cit. p. 482.

¹⁰⁶ op. cit. p. 478.

¹⁰⁷ op. cit. p. 478.